

SOCIAL JUSTICE GOALS OR ECONOMIC
RATIONALITY? THE SOUTH AFRICAN
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK CONSIDERED
IN THE LIGHT OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL
EXPERIENCES.

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Declaration

I, Jeffy Tanyarara Mukora, do hereby declare:

1. that the thesis has been composed by me, and
2. that the work is my own, and
3. that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification

ABSTRACT

In 1994, South Africa witnessed its first democratic elections after more than 40 years of apartheid. The Mandela government was faced with two major challenges. The first was to abolish the past injustices and inequalities inherited from apartheid and the second was to prepare South Africa for economic competitiveness in the global market. To these ends a series of education and training reforms were initiated and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 was one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the new democratic government. It paved way for the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), with SAQA as the overseeing authority.

The NQF is intended to overcome the imbalances created by the apartheid education and training systems and bring together, under a single overarching qualifications framework, the certification of learning in a range of settings. Its concern is to facilitate the vertical and horizontal mobility of learners over a lifetime.

The thesis considers the origins and the path followed by these initiatives in an attempt to address the challenges confronting South Africa. It contextualises this initiative within an analysis of the historical background, theoretical framework of globalisation and policy borrowing as well as the current situation with regard to the integration/unification of education and training.

The principal methods adopted are the analysis of historical and current documents, triangulated with interview data from policy makers and other key informants.

The study shows that the NQF in South Africa has its origins not only in the post-1994 policy agenda but also in the neo-liberal economic reforms initiated by the White apartheid government in the late 1970s to early 1980s in its attempt to address the economic and education crisis that was confronting the country. Further, this study finds that the development of the NQF in South Africa has been incremental rather than the product of a sharp break from the past. It is argued that in developing the NQF, SAQA did not take sufficiently into consideration the political, social and economic environment within which policy decisions have been taken. That being the case, it has been founded upon a political misapprehension, which has greatly impacted upon educational institution building.

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Preface

Personal reflections

My concerns about the divide between academic and vocational education have a long history. I am from Zimbabwe and I went to school at a Mission School where the curriculum was academically oriented. The only vocational subject that was on offer at that time and at that particular school was Agriculture and the subject combinations were done in such a way that the more able students would not take Agriculture as an option. I took the pure sciences option and was admitted for the Bachelor of Science degree under the Zimbabwe-Cuba-Teacher-Education-Programme (ZCTEP) from 1989-1994. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology Education at the University of Enrique Jose Varona, Havana, Cuba in July 1994. The environment in Cuba was different both politically and economically. The Cuban education system is commended for its success to effect a satisfactory integration between education and working life. Students combine study with manual work, meaning that some time is spent in classrooms and the other time in fields doing manual work. That was meant to prepare Cuba's labour force with appropriate value systems. Inappropriate value systems would mean a marked tendency to look down on manual work.

After graduating in Cuba, I went back to Zimbabwe towards the end of 1994 and started teaching Biology and Science in Mission, Government and Independent High Schools until January 2002. What was interesting during my experience as a teacher in Zimbabwe was that academic subjects were more valued than vocational subjects. During this time the curriculum became more diversified with more vocational subjects like Home Economics, Building Studies, Carpentry and Metal Work. At one school, teachers were rewarded for having best results achieved by pupils in their subjects but only academic subjects were considered for prizes. Vocational subjects were regarded to be relatively easy and meant for the less able students. During this period I had no idea of any strategies of reducing the gap between academic and vocational learning.

I came to Scotland at the beginning of 2002 and I was admitted in the MSc by Research in Education programme at Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. My first research proposal was about falling standards in Zimbabwe due to the localisation of its examinations. In the process of finalising the research proposal and finding a suitable supervisor, I was invited by Dr Gari Donn to attend a conference on qualifications frameworks that was held in Glasgow in early 2003. This was a landmark in my research career. At the conference I met: Dr Mokubung Nkomo, the then Chairperson of the SAQA Board; Mr Tony Davies of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority; Prof Michael Young from the Institute of Education (University of London); and Prof David Raffe from the University of Edinburgh. The presentations made by these people at the conference, and the group discussion I participated in, led by Michael Young, inspired me. After the conference, I met Tony Davies, Mokubung Nkomo and Gari Donn again and this further bolstered my interests in doing research on qualifications frameworks. I was given encouraging comments about connecting my study with South Africa, because it was the only country in the Southern African region at that time that had a developed qualifications framework.

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Many other people deserve recognition, including Michael Young, John Hart, among others for sharing information with me about issues on qualifications driven reforms.

Finally, this thesis could not have been written without the love, patience and support of all my family members living in the United Kingdom who made it possible for me to spend time on this programme, when other considerations indicated that I was needed elsewhere. It is to them that I dedicate this work.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAVA	Authority for Advanced Vocational Awards
AEC	Australian Education Council
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQFAB	Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Body
ASF	Australian Standards Framework
AU	African Union
AVC	Australian Vocational Certificate
ANC	African National Congress
CBT	Competency-Based Training
CBET	Competency-Based Education and training
CD	Consultative Document
CEPD	Centre for Educational Policy Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CSYS	Certificate of Sixth Year Studies
CUMUSA	Curriculum Model for South Africa
CUP	Committee of University Principles
DoE	Department of Education
DES	Department of Education and Science
DoL	Department of Labour
DNE	Department of National Education
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
ETQAs	Education and Training Qualifications Authorities
EU	European Union

FE	Further Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GCSEs	General Certification School Examinations
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution program
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GNU	Government of National Unity
GNVQS	General National Vocational Qualifications
GQSS-P	Generic Qualifications Standards Setting Project
HEQB	Higher Education and Qualifications Committee
HET	Higher Education and Training
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IMWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAAB	National Academic Awards Body
NAP	New Academic Policy
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation
NBEET	National Board for Employment, Education and Training
NCVQs	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NEQA	National Education Qualifications Authority
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NP	National Party
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

NSB	National Standards Body
NSW	New South Wales
NTB	National Training Body
NTI	New Training Initiative
NTSI	National Training Strategy Initiative
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers South Africa
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NVQB	National Vocational Qualifications Body
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee
OBET	Outcomes-Based Education and Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRISEC	Private Sector Education Council
PRP	Participatory Research Program
RDGs	Research and Development Groups
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (now Higher Education South Africa (HESA))
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SCOTBAC	Scottish Baccalaureate
SCOTCERT	Scottish Certificate
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational Educational Council
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SED	Scottish Education Department
SEQB	Secondary Education Qualifications Board

SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SETBs	Sector Education and Training Boards
SGAs	Scottish Group Awards
SGBs	Standards Generating Bodies
SOED	Scottish Office Education Department
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQs	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TNCs	Trans-National Corporations
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WPET	White Paper on Education and Training
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the South African Qualifications Framework

Introduction

In 1994 South Africa witnessed its first democratic elections after more than 40 years of deprivations suffered by the majority of its citizens. This was a moment in historical times, full of hope and fulfilment as the country achieved its independence. One of the legacies of apartheid was the differentiated education and training systems along racial and ethnic lines. The ANC government led by Nelson Mandela faced at least two major challenges: The first was to remove divisions inherited from the effects of apartheid. The second was to prepare South Africa for economic competitiveness in the face of globalisation. One of the policy initiatives adopted by the first democratic government was the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

I shall argue that the NQF initiative had been developing in South Africa since the early 1980s. The main objective of the NQF was to effect a fundamental restructuring of the education and training system from a fragmented and inequitable system inherited from apartheid to one that would enhance the country's talents, to ensure the elimination of skills deficits and bring about high standards and qualifications that reflect international best practices. The NQF objectives, as stated in the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 (RSA 1995), are:

- to create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths;
- to enhance the quality of education and training;

- to accelerate the redressing of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby
- contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

The development of this policy response reached great heights with the passage of the SAQA Act in 1995, and the establishment of the SAQA Board in 1996. These provided a framework for the development and the implementation of the NQF, with SAQA as the overseeing authority. There have been high expectations for the role of the NQF in helping transform education and training in South Africa (Young 2003; French 2005). The context of expressing the NQF objectives in very ambitious terms was to address the issues of redress in a country that was marked by a deeply fragmented and uncoordinated education and training system. The introduction of the NQF in South Africa was a purposeful and deliberate attempt to integrate education and training, all in the hope of redressing the injustices of the past and improving economic competitiveness in the global market. While imperatives¹ for qualification frameworks in most countries have been to raise student achievement and to increase overall participation in the education and training system (Philips 2003), the NQF in South Africa was the main example of a framework, primarily intended to contribute to a national programme of social reconstruction (Granville 2004). The integration of education and training was meant to provide a means for recognising learning in a way that would increase mobility of learners within the delivery system. The provision of articulated pathways was intended to provide learners with a range of possibilities for mobility: geographical, educational and social.

The national qualifications framework initiative was meant to attend to the needs of those particular students who schools and universities systematically neglected, and to attend to power differentials in the workplace by challenging the hierarchical divisions of education/training, academic/vocational, working/learning, and

¹ Philips (2003), defined a policy imperative as 'an enduring and significant policy issue that countries have attempted to address through their qualifications reform' (p. 32). The need for qualifications reform arose from a variety of drivers, including a combination of social and economic pressures.

workers/bosses (Bird 2003). The NQF also offered the potential to address some of the more subtle aspects of certain work-related injustices inherited from apartheid. Firstly, it was meant to recognise skills that have been traditionally been ignored or undervalued. Related to this, the competency-based approach aligned to the NQF offered opportunities for prior learning not developed within formal provisions, but rather through life or work experience to be recognised and acknowledged.

However, this placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF and SAQA and raised questions about the nature and extent of the transformation which SAQA and the NQF have been able to achieve. As shall be shown later, this line of thinking of transforming education and training had its origins in trade union and circles of other democratic movements in South Africa, since the early 1990s. Given the context of the history of apartheid and the legacy which it had left behind, it seemed that the NQF sought to introduce a revolutionary change rather than an evolutionary approach (Young 2005). This is the approach that has been taken by many authors and commentators in South Africa (Allais 2003; Bird 2003; Christie 1998; Cooper 1998; Department of Education (DoE) and Department of Labour (DoL) 2002; Isaacs & Nkomo 2003; Kgobe 1997; Kraak 2004; Mahomed 1996; McGrath 1996), who locate the origins of the NQF in post-1994 policy agendas, intended to be a break from the past and contribute to a national programme of social reconstruction (Granville 2004).

As shall be shown later, the guiding philosophy of this thinking was mainly based on the approach of Piore and Sabel as set out in their book *The Second Industrial Divide* (Piore and Sabel 1984). This approach, among many others, has been prompted by the perceptions of a number of economic crises and the resultant restructuring of economies that began in the early 1980s. What attracted the trade union movement and the democratic forces in South Africa was the liberating or democratic potential that Piore and Sabel (1984) saw in such changes. However, Piore and Sabel's approach was severely criticised (Kenway 1994) and its impact on South African production is highly questionable.

This thesis presents an alternative argument on the origins of the NQF in South Africa. It questions whether the NQF emerged out of an understanding of globalisation and policy borrowing, whether the approach is market driven/neo-liberal and whether those approaches also have origins in apartheid era. If it is the case, so what? This is my thesis.

As shall be shown later, in contrast to the win-win scenario for both capital and labour that Piore and Sabel saw in post-Fordism, the Regulation School (Boyer 1990) equates post-Fordism with a worsening of Fordism whereby there are continuing or new forms of hierarchical division of labour that has implications for education and training for all levels. Further, a particular reading of globalisation (Burbules and Torres 2000), another different theoretical approach to interpreting the post-Fordist scenario, predicted that the globalisation of the economy has produced economic integration on a world scale while workers and other vulnerable groups have become more fragmented and divided. While for Piore and Sabel (1984) post-Fordism is a win-win scenario for both capital and labour, for the Regulation School and globalisation, it is a win for capital. Watkins (1994), for instance, points out that the win for capital view of post-Fordism presented by the Regulationists places the ideological reassertion of the private sector's role in running the economy (and education) as a perceived major factor in solving the crises of Fordism. Here, education should perform a function in servicing the requirements of the industrial sector of the economy. In summary, these are the main issues that will form the basis of theoretical understandings underpinning this thesis.

These reforms on education and training have been influenced by the assumption that there is a positive relationship between education and economic development, even though this relationship is often problematic. Two general rationales support the link between education and development. The first constructs education as an investment in human capital, which will increase the productivity of labour and contribute to economic growth and development (Adelzadeh 1996; Brown and Lauder 1996). This rationale will be explored further in Chapter 3. The second general rationale

constructs education as a human right, imagining education as the prime mechanism for human beings to better themselves and to participate fully in the economy, politics and culture of their societies. This rationale is tied to notions of justice, equality, and individual human rights (Christie 1996). The economic and social justice rationales are seen as central to an understanding of the policy goals that qualification frameworks hope to achieve. However, there are palpable tensions between and within these two sets of rationales and in South Africa in particular, some commentators argue that it is the economic goals that are winning (Allais 2003).

However, while the issue of how best to raise the quality and productivity of human capital as well as addressing issues of social justice have been of concern to most countries, it has been addressed in various ways.

This thesis presents its case in accordance with the modified “garbage-can” model of organisational choice (Cohen et al, 1972)². The model is used here to show how ideas and concepts proposed by the previous Departments of National Education and Manpower could and should have been implemented, but due to the apartheid leadership or inevitable political change, were not adopted despite their appropriateness. To put it crudely, these ideas and concepts were thrown in the “garbage cans” of the organisation. At a time for political change, the African National Congress (ANC)/Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and their social partners were under pressure to propose alternative positions and strategies for replacing the apartheid system and this involved looking for overseas models when what was in the “garbage cans” of the outgoing government could have been adapted. The thesis argues that the ideas that were developed by the democratic movement to come up with an NQF in South Africa were the very same ideas that were in the “garbage cans” of the outgoing White government. The ideas were developed and modified in order to suit transformation goals. There is no doubt that apartheid was wrong, but some of the reform proposals of apartheid themselves were not faulty.

In the context of the background given above, the thesis will address the following four core research questions:

- What were the origins, both local and international, of the idea of a National Qualifications Framework in South Africa?
- How and why did the idea change over time?
- What part did globalisation and policy borrowing play in the trajectory followed by the NQF in South Africa? What were different strategies used in borrowing?
- Why did SAQA develop a framework that covered all academic and vocational learning based at school, in the workplace, and in non-formal environments?

In addition to these key questions, a series of further questions will be addressed briefly, which help to locate the study in a wider context. Who were the key players driving the NQF in South Africa? What kinds of resistance were there to the NQF? Why was the NQF outcomes-based? Why has the NQF review taken so long to conclude? What does the experience of South Africa to date suggest for other countries in sub-Saharan Africa interested in the idea of qualification frameworks?

Finally, some issues of research orientation and method will also be addressed. What does this research tell us about the methodological challenges of researching education and training policy in Africa?

² The model was used by Granville (2003) in a different sense to describe how the national framework for qualifications in Ireland evolved over the past 20 years.

Purpose of the Study

The principal aim of this dissertation is to map the origins and trajectory of South Africa's NQF and to use policy borrowing as a framework for understanding globalisation and its relationship to education and training.

Although the NQF concept is a recent development, the ideas and concerns it expresses have a long history in South Africa that back date to the early 1980s. Much of the existing literature (highlighted earlier on) that locates the origins of the NQF in post-apartheid policy discourse has been influenced by a particular reading of post-Fordism expressed by Piore and Sabel (1984) and others. This view predicted a collapse of the academic and vocational divisions as a result of the changes in the organisation of work and the economy pointed out by Piore and Sabel (1984). The idea of integrating education and training followed from these arguments and in South Africa, it became a powerful case for the democratic movement in the early 1990s as it was used as part of a strategy for achieving redress and overcoming the inequalities of the past. However, Piore and Sabel's views have been severely criticised (Kenway 1994) for underplaying the restructuring of western economies and their need for new production methods that produced flexible specialisation and new forms of production in the 80s and 90s.

The collection edited by Jane Kenway (*ibid.*) presents alternative approaches to interpreting post-Fordism. There is an important argument about post-Fordism as a new form of hierarchical division of labour presented by the Regulation School and theories of globalisation that has implications for education and training at all levels; so it is not just the collapse of academic and vocational divisions that is looked for, but the emergence of new kinds of adaptable worker (including the elites).

The thesis uses the alternative views of post-Fordism (Kenway *ibid.*) and theories of globalisation to critique the notion of integration of education and training that is based on the reading of post-Fordism postulated by Piore and Sabel (1984). The trade union movement in South Africa and other democratic movements proposed

the integration of education and training basing on Piore and Sabel's model of flexible specialisation. The thesis argues that these assumptions were inadequate and presents an alternative view that is based on the Regulation School and a particular reading of globalisation.

The concept of globalisation will be used selectively for my arguments. Firstly, the thesis treats globalisation as a discourse, and looks at its impacts on policy text production in different contexts (with the underlying assumptions that this discursive production has material effects, that is it does shape policy). Secondly, globalisation is treated in the economic context, exploring the case for capital's need for flexible workforces, and the desire of national systems to capture or attract capital through its appropriately certificated/trained workers. Thirdly, globalisation is treated in the cultural context, exploring how the 'big policies in a small world' (Ball 1998; Lingard 2000) are indigenised, translated and mediated by various local contextual factors. Fourthly, globalisation is understood through the influence of international and transnational agencies, such as the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) who require systems to be organised in ways that they can measure (for example through common qualifications) in order to assess their needs (Ball 1998).

The concept of policy borrowing is applied to show how certain overseas policies introduced in the 1980s and 1990s especially in England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand have influenced existing indigenous developments in South Africa. The thesis will use a policy borrowing schema developed and modified from the work of Phillips and Ochs (2003), Schriewer (2000), Steiner-Khamasi (2000) and Spreen (2004) to trace the borrowing strategies and mechanisms together with key individuals who were present in the process that shaped the trajectory of South Africa's NQF.

In mapping the trajectory followed by the NQF in South Africa, the thesis will explain how it has been changing and suggest why it has been changing. The first landmark was when the ANC/COSATU and other social partners proposed an

ambitious integrated system of education and training with the aim of pursuing social justice goals and removing the divisions created by apartheid in the early 1990s. In an integrated system, education and training would be under one ministry and all learning and all qualifications would fit in a single mould. This was a shift from the previous emphasis on the economy found in a number of apartheid policies. In other words, the proposed NQF was meant to balance the needs of the economy with those of social justice and redress. The thesis will discuss the tensions between and within these two sets of goals.

The second landmark is located in the discussions organised by the National Training Board between 1993 and 1994, which led to the publication of the *Discussion Document on a National Training Strategy Initiative* (NTSI) in 1994 (National Training Board 1994). In this forum, an integrated approach to education and training rather than an integrated system was proposed. This meant that education and training were to remain as distinguishable systems but linked by a national qualifications framework. The first education policy document of the democratic South Africa, the *White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE 1995), endorsed an integrated approach to education and training.

An Inter-Ministerial Working Group, (henceforth the IMWG), was established in 1994 to sponsor the NQF Bill, which became the SAQA Act, promulgated in October 1995 (RSA 1995). In 1996 a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was established to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF.

In developing the NQF, SAQA traced its trajectory back to the proposals and developments that were envisaged by the democratic movement of creating a comprehensive and seamless education and training system. SAQA chose a particular model that included all qualifications in education and training, whether school based, occupational and work based or degrees offered by universities and other bodies. The South African NQF was designed to be comprehensive and based on one overarching definition of what a qualification is.

The thesis will examine why SAQA decided to adopt such an approach towards qualifications reform based on standards and outcomes for all qualifications and, secondly, based on a comprehensive model founded on a number of principles such as articulation, progression, flexibility and portability.

The development of a single national qualifications structure was not unique to South Africa in terms of international practice. Universities and the more academic schools fiercely resisted a similar model developed in New Zealand in 1991. There has been a steady reversal of policy by the New Zealand government who have agreed to exclude university degrees and school examinations from their framework.

The thesis will also investigate whether there were other options of different types of qualifications framework for SAQA to choose from; and, if so, why was the adopted model the preferred option. The process of putting the structures in place for the implementation of the NQF took from 1996 to 1999.

In 2001, the Ministers of Education and Labour appointed a Review Team to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems and procedures adopted by SAQA to implement the SAQA Act. The key theme in the recommendations of the Study Team Report (DoE and DoL 2002) was that education and training should remain as separate subsystems but interrelated, a shift away from the system put in place by SAQA, which assumed a seamless integration of education and training.

In 2003, the Departments of Education and Labour issued a joint response to the Study Team Report. The joint response, *An Interdependent Qualifications Framework System* (DoE and DoL 2003) came in the form of a Consultative Document (CD) and the Ministers called for public comment on the document without committing themselves to it. This is normal procedure before a policy document is sent to cabinet for approval. The deadline for public responses was October 2003. An Inter-departmental Task Team, which produced the CD, received written submissions from the public in the latter part of 2003 and there has been no

official communication since the end of the public consultation in October 2003. The CD ‘embodies a new perspective of the NQF’ and proposed three learning pathways, a dramatic shift away from the original NQF agenda of the early 1990s. The thesis will show that some of the ideas and concepts proposed in the CD were proposed and rejected in the earlier debates. In other words, the proposal of the three learning pathways can be found in “the garbage cans” of the White government.

Data-gathering methods used in the study

The methods that were considered most appropriate and productive for this study were documentary analysis and interviews with policy makers and other key informants. The methods were carefully selected in order to explain the policy process rather than the impact of the NQF on the ground. Other research tools such as surveys/questionnaires were not considered since the study was not designed to make use of such methods. It would have been quite useful to use a survey if the aim of the study was to analyse the successes/failures of the NQF. Since the purpose of this study was to explain the policy process, a survey was dropped and the methods opted for will be discussed below.

Documentary evidence

This method is particularly relevant to the historical aspect of the study, including the most recent documents. A series of primary sources have been used in this study, including Reports of official commissions; Annual reports; Parliamentary Acts and Statutes associated with the introduction of the NQF; Responses from various stakeholders; and other policy-related documents. Documents and the relevant body of literature that has a focus upon qualifications reform since the early to mid-1980s related to South Africa, England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand were also studied. Through the study of international texts, it was possible to see the way in which South African educators and other interested parties interpreted the texts and

how they aligned them with their own practices. The thesis also draws on an extensive literature focussing upon aspects of globalisation and policy borrowing

Most of the documents consulted were acquired through university libraries and other resource centres as well as through the Internet. It was much easier to acquire documents related to South African education and training reforms in the UK than in South Africa itself, thanks to the previous work done by Dr Simon McGrath and Professor Kenneth King, who have donated most of the policy documents they have acquired in South Africa to the Edinburgh University library. Most of the documents including those related to England, Australia and New Zealand were acquired through the British Library. There was no need for me to travel around all these countries to acquire the documents, reinforcing King's (2005) point that 'the field is not only out there' (p. 48), but can be where the research training and the coursework are delivered.

The method of documentary research raises a number of methodological challenges. Their selection was not based on representative or random sampling or the collection of all available documents. The nature of this study did not require the use of such techniques. Given the huge amount of materials written about the NQF in South Africa and internationally, as well as the constraints of time, it was not possible to make use of all the relevant data. A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted based on the selection of information-rich and appropriate sources that were pertinent to my research questions (Patton 2002). In actual fact selection was framed by choice and not availability of texts.

After locating the key documents for this research, the next step was to check on authenticity and evaluate the documents to see whether they were a reliable account of the events or not. This was done through initial background reading to the available texts and this led to some texts being preferred over others. As the research was progressing and taking shape with new insights emerging, the exploration of some documents was dropped and that of others included. According to Larson (2001):

It is important to interpret documents within their historic, situational, and communication contexts. We need to understand the purpose of a document and events leading up to it to interpret its meaning correctly. In his book on propaganda analysis, George recommends applying the formula: *who said what to whom under what circumstances* and with *what purpose* (p. 343).

This requires that each document be evaluated relative to what is known about the actors, their intentions, their interactions, and the situations they found themselves in. This is emphasised by Holmes (1997) who stated that history does not comprise a single reality, but rather multiple realities, each one shaped by the perspective from which it is viewed. For this reason it has been suggested (ibid.) that the historical researcher should determine who wrote the material, why it was written and when. Using documents with due regard to the process and social context of their construction was the approach that was taken in this study.

Concerns about the validity of documentary research have also been raised (Gummerson 1991; Platt 1981a,b; Scott 1990; Thies 2002). It has been noted (Platt 1981) that relying exclusively on documentary accounts would result in biased interpretations and that validity check “is likely to be impossible with documentary data” (p. 58). The main way of increasing the validity, strength, and interpretative potential of a study, decreasing investigator biases, and provide multiple perspectives is through triangulation (Silverman 1993). For this research within-method triangulation (Lincoln and Guba 1985) was employed. Within-method triangulation uses at least two data-collection procedures from the same design approach (ibid.). This study triangulates documentary evidence with interviews with several authors of texts and commentators of those texts considered in this thesis and other key informants (see below).

Another strategy employed to address concerns about validity was to make explicit the grounds for interpreting data. Potter and Wetherell (1987), suggested the following approach:

The goal is to present analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher’s interpretations (p. 172).

The above suggestion emphasises the need to make interpretation explicit, and in this research in particular, I used extended extracts as part of the write-up of documentary research.

Whilst negative perceptions of documentary research have been highlighted, the analysis of documents can add much to existing research scholarship, by complementing existing knowledge and contributing new knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to acquire. Research on South Africa education and training reforms continues to rely on documentary analysis as a research tool (see for example Buckland 1984, Kallaway 1984 and McGrath 1996).

Although a substantial documentary analysis of education and training policy in South Africa has been carried out, notably the work of McGrath (1996), which engaged with official documents of the 1980s and earlier, it did so at a different angle from this thesis. This thesis draws on historical data to delineate timelines in the development of policy: it may be that NQF policies have their origins in the pre-1994 period and even in apartheid education and training policy. This is the gap in the present literature that this thesis is attempting to fill. The thesis draws from de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the HSRC/NTB (1984) to locate the early ideas of the NQF, which were marginalised and not acknowledged in the reform proposals of the trade union movement and other democratic forces when they came with an idea of integrating education and training through a national qualifications framework. A closer look at the education and training reforms proposed by the White government in 1981 and 1984 shows that it was the same reforms that were picked up and modified in subsequent reforms proposed by the democratic forces. In actual fact, the thesis is revisiting documents, which have been analysed before but discovering elements of the NQF that were ignored in the earlier analysis.

Interviewing

Data collected through the documents was triangulated with interview data.

Interviews can be constructed in several different forms: structured, semi-structured, unstructured, or focus groups (May 2001). Structured interviews are conducted using a prepared line of questioning, and may only permit certain sorts of answers (e.g. yes/no). Each person is asked the same question in the same way and the respondent is guided according to the sequence of questions on the interview schedule. Questions in semi-structured interviews take the form of open-ended and themes that the respondent can comment on. This method allows the respondent to expand and probe beyond the issues raised (Fielding 1988). Unstructured interview is much more loosely guided (although the interviewer doubtless has some goals in mind when conducting the interview), with no pre-set structure for the interviewer to follow. For this study, there was no specific interview structure used, although I had a checklist of questions (see Appendix A) and these were incorporated as the interview progresses. The structure of these checklist questions was determined by factors such as who the participants were and areas of interest and expertise and the availability of time.

In most cases semi-structured interviews were used because of the flexibility that this approach provides. Different respondents had different experiences with the NQF process and I wanted to use the flexibility of semi-structured interviews to explore their individual experiences. As each individual played different roles and represented different sectors or organisations, distinct interview checklists were prepared for each interviewee. Although many questions were focussed on the same themes, they were tailored to the position and knowledge of the interviewee. However, the reliability of data generated from semi-structured interviews is often subject to criticism as this method is said to lack perfect comparability between responses (May 2001). An attempt to overcome this weakness was made as data generated from one interview helped to shape subsequent interviews, thus providing some degree of crosschecking.

In other cases, some interviews were unstructured especially where respondents were asked about their roles and involvement in the NQF, and again some checklist questions were prepared depending on who was being interviewed. This method allowed individuals to talk about themselves within their own frames of references.

This open discussion technique was also used with key informants who were directly involved with the history of the NQF in South Africa. They were given in advance a brief historical chronology of events (with extracts from the de Lange Report) and key documents that led to the development of the NQF, as I understood them (see Appendix C). Respondents were then asked to comment on the summary of events, reflecting on their own experiences. This method was very useful as the respondents were able to point to some missing dates as well as to important documents and also challenged some of my interpretations. The respondents also suggested other more suitable informants. It is important to note that some of my respondents were not willing to talk about apartheid reforms, like the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the reasons were varied. Some were not involved in the earlier debates so could not comment and others were unaware of such reforms. In other words, to them apartheid was a thing of the past.

Choice of respondents

Respondents were selected based on their role in the origins and trajectory of the NQF. A series of 35 interviews were conducted with 25 individuals representing the Government, SAQA, industry, the National Training Board, ANC, trade unions and international consultants (Appendix B gives a list of respondents and their institutional affiliations). The technique of sampling applied in documentary analysis was also applied here in choosing appropriate participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. Some respondents were interviewed more than once because of their involvement with the NQF. For example Adrienne Bird and Trevor Coomb were each interviewed three times. As indicated above, the selection of some participants was influenced by the comments of those interviewed and also by review

of a list of key people who participated in commissions or review committees. In most cases, the recommended interviewees had access to information that the original interviewees did not. By interviewing these people, I gained further information on the topic, as predicted by the original individuals who gave their names. It is worth explaining that all the respondents that were selected were interviewed, although there were a lot of changes in the interview schedule due to other commitments on the part of the respondents. There were no problems encountered with respect to refusing to be interviewed, although some were critical of my assumptions and other were not willing to comment on specific issues, such as borrowing ideas from de Lange.

Access

A common problem and challenge of doing research in Africa is that of accessing 'key informants' (Jansen 2005), or as King (2005) put it, people who are able to offer a graduate student

not just information but knowledge and insight grounded in the years of experience with the very phenomena that the student is planning to research (p. 51)

I expected to encounter some difficulties in gaining access to some of my key respondents, like Adrienne Bird formerly from the Department of Labour and the Chief Executive Officer of SAQA and other respondents as well. I had established some contacts in South Africa before through conferences and my MSc research project, which looked at the problems and challenges of implementing the NQF (Mukora 2003). My earlier contacts with Professor Jonathan Jansen, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria made it easier to arrange the interviews. I was hosted as a guest of the Dean at the University of Pretoria for six months with office space, desk, computer and telephone (only for arranging interviews). Four of my respondents from SAQA were Jonathan Jansen's PhD students so I met them frequently as they were coming to the University for their routine studies. With the influence of Professor Jansen, it was easy to arrange interviews conducted in South Africa. It is also important to note that my status as a student researcher from Edinburgh University, and originally from a different country doing research on South Africa have facilitated access to the interviewees.

However, there were still problems that were encountered in tracking respondents who participated in the de Lange Report in 1981, one of my key documents for this thesis. Considering that it was twenty years ago, most people connected to the de Lange Commission had retired with no traceable contacts. It was difficult to find the whereabouts of Professor de Lange himself. However, three people who were in different sub-committees and one of them was secretary to the de Lange Committee were interviewed. I managed to arrange a one to one interview with two of them and the third was a telephone interview.

The interview process and ethical considerations

As already indicated, interview structures employed depended upon the people interviewed and the themes and issues under discussion. Generally, prior to each interview, a copy of the topic or themes to be discussed during the interview was sent to the interviewee to review. This was usually accompanied by a brief overview of the purpose of my research in order to place the information given to the interviewee in a wider context. Normally interviews would start with brief introductions and short informal chat about South Africa or Zimbabwe. Once the interview was underway, I began by asking for their permission to tape-record the interviews. While some agreed to be tape-recorded, some preferred me to take notes instead. This means that participants were free to exercise their rights to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in the study or to be tape-recorded. Most of the interviews recorded were transcribed for the purpose of clarification.

The initial questions at the start of each interview were fairly broad ranging and gave the opportunity for respondents to say who they were, their positions and their roles in developing the NQF. The respondents would then address the issues or themes presented in the order of their preference. In each case I had some prepared questions to guide the interview, but these were incorporated if a related topic arose during the discussion. Most interviews lasted more than one hour and others were followed up by email and telephone in order to pick up on relevant issues. As

indicated earlier on, the more significant policy actors who were involved in different stages of the NQF process were interviewed more than once, as it was not possible to cover everything they did in one interview.

Some ethical considerations that arose during the interviews were with regard to the use that would be made of the material provided. Some respondents stated that although much of the interview material could be quoted, some of the comments were for the researcher's personal use only as background information. Where I intended to use verbatim quotes and attribute them as a source, I needed to check with them first. Only texts I wanted to use for quotes were sent via email for further comments and clarifications. Still others wanted to be identified as anonymous respondents and these are reflected in Appendix B. It is important to point out that while most interview material was used throughout the thesis, most quotations are from a small number of respondents. These were the very few individuals who were key players in the policy trajectory of the NQF. As per agreement with the interviewees, some verbatim quotes are identified by the name of the respondent while others are coded according to the interview (personal communication) number including the relevant dates e.g. [PC 01, 21/11/04] and a full list of respondents is given in Appendix B).

Researching the Powerful

Many of my respondents in this study were individuals who held positions of power: the Deputy Director General (DoL), the CEO of SAQA, the CEO of the CHE (also advises the Minister of Education), the Dean of a major University, the Chair of the SAQA Board. Each played key roles in shaping South Africa's NQF, and could be termed as 'elite respondents' (Ball 1994).

Whitty and Edwards (1994) highlighted some of the important difficulties that can be encountered in using interviews as a research instrument for elite studies. These problems include gaining access and getting complete information. Ball (1994)

pointed out that powerful people may not tell the whole story about their involvement in a policy process nor the purpose associated with particular events, and cautioned that they are skilled interviewees. He commented:

As regards elite interviewing, especially when this touches upon issues of public concern, we need to recognise and explore more fully the interview as an extension of the "play of power" rather than separate from it, merely a commentary upon it (p. 113).

The observations made by Ball were relevant in the present research. The NQF in South Africa is a controversial policy, which, according to many, was introduced as a way to separate the present from the past. Therefore my associating this initiative with the apartheid era was potentially problematic. In addition, the NQF has divided the country into two main groups: one that supports SAQA and the other against its operation. Elite respondents had a tendency of defending their positions. So the analysis of this research project should be read with caution considering that perceptions from elite interviewees may have been a misinterpretation of what actually happened, or that views expressed were those they wanted heard but which may not have been accurate. However, this was countered by interviewing some non-elite respondents.

Interview Data Analysis

Interview notes were handwritten as well as tape-recorded and some transcribed. For those that were not transcribed, tapes were played through and notes taken on pages ruled into three columns: one column contained the tape recorder counter number, the second contains a running index of content, and the third was devoted to verbatim quotes. It is important to note that although most of the analysis of the data was done after the fieldwork, initial analysis was done whilst the data was being collected. This enabled me to adjust my strategies, shift emphasis as appropriate and to prepare for subsequent interviews. This iterative interaction between gathering data and analysis is the essence of attaining reliability and validity (Marshall and Rossman 1989).

After reading the transcribed and written texts several times looking for ideas, I identified themes that emerged. The transcripts were then coded into categories by using a combination of manual and computer-aided methods. This enabled me to organise large amounts of text and discovered patterns that would have been difficult to detect by just listening to a tape or reading a transcript. I used NVivo, a software tool that supports the development of hierarchical categories of coding. In developing categories, Marshal and Rossman (*ibid.*) were helpful. They suggested looking at common themes that emerge from the responses and questioning how the patterns (or lack thereof) help to illuminate the broader study questions. It was also noted that through questioning the data and reflecting on the conceptual framework, the researcher engages the ideas and the data in significant intellectual work. Most of the interview material was used to inform my interpretation of documents and of the context in which they were produced.

Following preliminary reading and initial identification of themes in each of the interviews and documents consulted, I met with my supervisors to discuss the emerging themes that best describe the origins and trajectory of the NQF in South Africa.

After analysing the data, the next step was to evaluate the data for their informational adequacy, credibility and usefulness (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Weiss 1997). Research questions were then reviewed based on the findings of this study. I reached the conclusion that the data gathered is useful in illuminating the questions being explored in this research.

Overview of Chapters

This thesis is concerned with the understanding of the origins and trajectory of South African's NQF within its historical context as well as within the theoretical framework of globalisation and policy borrowing. This understanding emerged out of interviews, documentary analysis and review of relevant body of literature. The

thesis examines the origins of the NQF across the following questions: where does the idea of a NQF in South Africa come from? Is it indigenous to South Africa? Does it come out of Apartheid education and training systems? If so, what does that tell us about the current 1990s and 2000s development and implementation debates?

The influences of globalisation and policy borrowing are examined across the following questions: What part did globalisation and policy borrowing play in shaping South Africa's NQF? What was borrowed? Why? From where? What were the different strategies for borrowing? How were borrowed ideas mediated by local conditions?

The following chapters outline different perspectives on the origins of the NQF based on documentary analysis and interview with policy makers and other key informants. Specifically, this study examines how the NQF originated in South Africa and how international influences shaped local ideas into a qualifications framework. The analysis of documents showed how education and training reforms occurred and how modifications were made as a result of overseas influences. This historical analysis was supplemented by views and perceptions of those involved in the policy process. This background and the methodology used to carry out this study stand as chapter 1.

Chapter 2 will proceed by first examining the meaning and features of Fordism. Secondly, the competing approaches of post-Fordism will be examined in turn. These are: the French Regulation School; Piore and Sabel's flexible specialisation; the Japanese model; the New Times approach; and the Globalisation School. This chapter provides an overall framework within which the analysis of this research is located. It uses policy borrowing as tool for understanding globalisation and its influences on education and training. It develops a schema that show the borrowing strategies and mechanisms that will help to explain the origins and trajectory of South Africa's NQF. The policy-borrowing model developed draws from the work of Phillips and Ochs (2003), Schriewer (2000), Steiner-Khamasi (2000) and Spreen (2004).

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on integration and qualifications frameworks. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will explore the academic/vocational debate and its links to economic performance. The second will draw on debates about bringing closer together of academic education and vocational learning. This involves a range of measures, which may involve complete integration of academic and vocational learning, or other organisational or curricular changes which attempt to bring them closer. It will be shown that these measures may or may not involve qualifications frameworks.

Drawing from section one and two, the third section will discuss the role of qualifications frameworks in bringing academic education and vocational training close together. It will discuss the imperatives of qualifications frameworks and the different forms qualifications frameworks may take. Some international examples will be given to illustrate this variation.

Chapter 4 gives an overview of reforms of post compulsory education and training in countries such as England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. The developments in these countries have had an influence on South Africa's reforms. The bulk of the analysis draws on the experiences of the UK because it has most influenced the debates in South Africa through the involvement of Michael Young. Selection of the reforms to be analysed in the four countries depends on their influence on South Africa's qualifications driven reform.

Chapter 5 gives the background of the history of education and training under apartheid from the dates prior to 1976. The chapter will show the deeply fragmented education and training systems along racial lines, which resulted in the dramatic unrest in Black schools in 1976 associated with the Soweto uprisings, and similar widespread school boycotts commencing in the Coloured schools of the western Cape in the early 1980s. These were protests against the injustices and inequalities of apartheid and together with economic demands for more skilled labour, this period was widely described as "The Education and Economic Crisis".

In addition to outlining the Apartheid education and training system, chapter five gives an overview of economic and manpower trends that were prevailing in South Africa in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which triggered education and training reform.

The chapter gives an analysis of the first two key documents of this study: the de Lange Report (DNE 1981) and the HSRC/NTB's published report entitled *An Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA* (HSRC/NTB 1984). These two documents have provided the building blocks upon which the NQF was built.

Chapter 6 considers the emergence of a different political climate of the early 1990s until the election period in 1994. This period was characterised by the process of negotiations on one hand and the growth of globalisation and high technology on the other. Even though the political and ideological climate was different from the previous period, this chapter will point to the continuities with the past reform initiatives. The major state policy document of the 1990s; the *Education Renewal Strategy*, will be analysed together with propositions from the NEPI, COSATU and the ANC. Central to the deliberations of the COSATU/ANC alliance was the call for the integration of education and training, which had its resonance with previous reforms. The last part of this chapter will focus primarily on the education and training compromise that was envisaged for the Government of National Unity clearly set out in the *National Training Strategy Initiative* (NTB 1994).

Chapter Seven explores SAQA's education and training agenda for putting in place a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework. The chapter draws from key documents such as *The White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE 1995), the *SAQA Act* (RSA 1995) and other policy documents produced by SAQA to develop and implement the NQF. It will also draw from a range of reactions to the NQF from different stakeholders. The principle data for this chapter comes from a series of stakeholder interviews including SAQA staff and academic commentators. The chapter will show that on the one hand, the phrase "an integrated approach" in the

White Paper was a symbolic phrase designed to signal progress as opposed to affecting real change on the ground. On the other hand SAQA took that phrase seriously and put into effect their mandate as spelled out in the SAQA Act. This did have an effect on the trajectory followed by the NQF since then.

Chapter Eight deals with the NQF review and the Report of the Study Team. The chapter will provide an account of how the report came into being, an examination of the submissions to the Study Team and an analysis of the formal findings and recommendations. Completing the picture, the chapter moves on to examine the joint response of the Departments of Education and Labour to the Study Team Report. A concern of this part will be the crucial shift in the policy direction of the NQF. This part of the chapter confronts us with the real problem of qualification driven reforms: the divergent epistemological, ideological and institutional positions that lie behind conflicting approaches to the notion of integration of education and training in South Africa.

Chapter Nine uses the theoretical framework of globalisation and policy borrowing to discuss the main findings of this research project, review of the research questions and make conclusions.

Chapter 2: Post-Fordism, Globalisation and Policy Borrowing: Towards a Conceptual Framework

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a conceptual framework through which the core debates of the thesis can better be focussed. The key debate concerns the integration of education and training, and this emerged out of the way in which the current changes in the relations of the workplace have been interpreted. Claims that Western economies were under going fundamental changes from a Fordist to some form of a post-Fordist economy since the late 1980s and the assertion that we are living in a post-Fordist era (Mathews 1989; Brown and Lauder 1997) gained considerable support.

The chapter sets out the main arguments surrounding the notion of Fordism and proceeds to sketch out a number of different theoretical approaches to interpreting the post-Fordist scenario. It will then discuss the implications for education and training of the main approaches. Last, but not least, the chapter will discuss policy borrowing as a tool for understanding globalisation and educational reform.

Before considering these debates, it should be made clear that for this thesis, globalisation is perceived as an alternative interpretation of post-Fordism alongside: the French Regulation School; the approach of Piore and Sabel as set out in their book *The Second Industrial Divide* (Piore and Sabel 1994); the Japanese model of management; and the New Times approach (Watkins 1994). It is also worth noting that the notions of the existence of any form of post-Fordism are complex and highly contested (Kenway 1994).

The differing approaches to interpreting post-Fordism have had some significant influences on how the debates on education and training are conceptualised, in turn

influencing national and transnational understandings in education, training and qualification driven reforms. One particular strand of post-Fordism, as we shall discuss later, has had an influence on thinking in trade union circles in countries such as Australia and South Africa (Kraak 1992; McGrath 1996; Watkins 1994).

Accordingly, this chapter will proceed by first examining the meaning of Fordism in order to establish the roots of post-Fordism. Secondly, the competing theses of post-Fordism will be examined in turn and their implications for education and training will be discussed. Lastly, but not least, some of the complexities of policy borrowing will be set out.

Fordism

This section will look at the general characteristics of Fordism. A system of mechanised mass production (requiring mass consumption) called Fordism after the car assembly line built by Ford in the 1920s was dominant within industrial economies from the 1920s to the 1970s (Harvey 1989; Hampson 1991; Hyman 1991; Mathews 1989a and b; Pollert 1991). Fordism derived mainly from organisational and technological innovations at the point of production associated with Henry Ford and from Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*. Taylor's principles of management were characterised by a labour process based around the separation of conception from execution, time and motion studies and the fragmentation of tasks. These became embedded in the organisation of work in the car industry (Brown 1994; Watkins 1994). However, Ford modified the work process by introducing the continuous-flow, assembly-line method of work and a new approach to the control of his workforce.

This method of organising work provided unambiguous direction to work and meant the 'delivery of work to each worker instead of leaving it to the workmen's initiative to find out' (Edwards 1979: 118). The development of the assembly line with conveyors and handling devices meant the materials flowed around the factory floor past the workers instead of workers moving to and from the materials, a process

regarded as time consuming. The conveyor belts not only got work off the factory floor but also set the timing of the work which employees had to do. Moreover, the development of the assembly line with conveyor belts undermined traditional working skills in a situation where workers became increasingly specialised.

Under Taylor's management system, labour productivity is increased by breaking traditionally complex labour tasks by study specialists into series of simplified jobs that could be performed by unskilled workers who easily could be trained for the tasks.

Some of the characteristics of Fordism can be summarised based on the transformation from craft production to mass production. Unlike craft production, where each part was specially designed, made and fitted, the hallmark of the system of production and consumption was standardisation, from the various components of the product, the manufacturing process to the product itself. This standardisation facilitated the use of routine machine and work processes throughout and meant that advanced machines could be permanently placed into the production process as they would be used in the same way over and over again. Advances in technology effectively transferred skill from machine operators into the technology itself thereby resulting in deskilling³ and job fragmentation. This meant that people with little training and experience, thereby reducing labour costs, could perform work.

However, there has been much debate as to the extent and occurrence of Fordism (Watkins 1994). Hyman (1991), for instance, questions whether Ford's approaches in the production of his cars extended very far outside a small percentage of industry. Many industries were small, specialised and employed a variety of management strategies in the production of their goods. Maller and Dwolatsky (1993), too, were sceptical about the application of a rigid model of Fordism and post-Fordism in South African manufacturing. They argued that the process of production should be

³ This did not mean that machine operators had no working knowledge and experience nor simply that their skills were no longer all round craft skills and recognised by management. The specialists were deskilled in the general sense, yet in possession of job specific skills and competencies for operating specialised machinery.

conceptualised as a continuum, rather than in terms of the polar opposites of Fordism and Post-Fordism.

It is claimed that the first signs of the decline of Fordism as an industrial era were apparent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, at a time when a post-industrial society was also emerging (Allen 1992). This period of crisis in Fordism corresponds to the time in the wake of a series of political and economic challenges including student and worker protests in North America and Western Europe in 1968, the oil crisis in the early 1970s, the rising inflation and unemployment and the collapse of the Bretton Woods financial system. This crisis caused a decline in productivity rates and economic and political forces started to look for a new state form that would be able to solve the problem. Jessop (1994) argues that what was gradually emerging from the search process was a structural transformation and fundamental strategic reorientation of the capitalist state.

The post-Fordist concept is then constructed, through various narratives of change, in opposition to this oversimplified model of organisation of work and the labour market including social life in this Fordist argument.

Post-Fordism

This section sketches out a number of different approaches to understanding the post-Fordist argument, although much space is given to the approach of Piore and Sabel as set out in their book *The Second Industrial Divide* (1984). This is the approach, which has most influenced debates on integration of education and training in South Africa. These approaches include but not limited to:

- the French Regulation School;
- the idea of flexible specialisation proposed by Piore and Sabel (1984);
- the Japanese model;
- the New Times approach; and
- the globalisation theory.

The French Regulation School

The Regulation Approach emerged in France in the 1970s (Boyer 1990). This school of thought argued that the crises in capitalist accumulation were regulated in such a way as to prevent for a time any major crisis. Boyer (1990: 118) defines regulation as

the dynamic process of the adaptation of production and social demand, that is the combination of the economic adjustments associated with a configuration of social relations, institutional forms, and structures.

For this school, the behaviour of economic agents is a product of social forces. This school provides interesting analyses regarding the social processes occurring within the institutional sphere. This approach examines the role of the state in coordinating national economic strategy and in ensuring national consensus in support of the strategy. It also examines the role of other social players and institutions (e.g. education and training systems) in this process (Jessop 1990). The approach shares the view that this network of institutional relations ensures conditions of economic prosperity and stability. According to this theory whenever global or national crises emerge (for example the world economic crisis of the late 70s or in South Africa during the late 70s and early 80s), they are a result of incoherence and malfunctioning of the institutional elements within the mode of regulation. What follows is a period of institutional restructuring in order to put in place a new mode of capitalist regulation.

However, the Regulationists (Jessop 1990; Boyer 1990) suggest that the new regime of capitalist accumulation and the new mode of capitalist regulation have brought a neo-Fordism and not post-Fordism. Neo-Fordism is characterised by workers who must be multiskilled and who operate in semi-autonomous groups (Watkins 1994). This approach claims that these trends are an outcome of the increasing use of new technologies, which have facilitated the more flexible use of both capital equipment and labour (ibid.). However, it is by no means certain that these new combinations have indeed replaced Fordism (Boyer 1990), therefore the Regulationists prefer to use the term neo-Fordism since there is no clear break with Fordism (Watkins 1994).

Another defining feature of the regulation school is its interpretation of the regulation of the global economic order. This approach is concerned with the insertion of national economies into the global economic order. They argue that the global economic system is arranged hierarchically or in pecking order among national economies (Soucek 1994). Their main concern is how national economies might change as a result of their insertion into this hierarchically arranged global economic system. There is an important argument about their post-Fordism (or more correctly, neo-Fordism) as a new form of hierarchical division of labour-a three tier system that has implications for education and training at all levels (ibid.). We will see later that this variant is linked to the economic aspect of globalisation.

Flexible specialisation

The flexible specialisation thesis is exemplified by the work of Piore and Sabel as set out in their book *The Second Industrial Divide* (Piore and Sabel 1984). Although Piore and Sabel use the term regulation in their theorising of post-Fordism, they have marked differences with the Regulation School. In fact, Piore and Sabel noted that 'the concepts of historical change and economic crisis with which we associate it differ from those concepts in the French theory' (1984: 4). While the Regulation School view post-Fordism as a win for capital, Piore and Sabel's thesis on flexible specialisation see post-Fordism as a win for both workers and bosses.

Like other post-Fordists, Piore and Sabel argue that the period of Fordism has been marked by a tendency of concentrated, centralised mechanised mass production of goods in large integrated production sites. However, between 1968 and 1973 (King and McGrath 2002) this period of organised capitalism started to collapse. Piore and Sabel (1984) argue that this crumble of Fordism signifies the 'second industrial divide', as opposed to the first industrial divide that marked the rise of the mass production system. They argue that the crises in Fordist economies were a result of limitations inbuilt in economies organised on mass production principles (ibid.). Piore and Sabel (ibid.) argue that these crises have led to a second industrial divide

where organised, mass production techniques are being replaced by the model of flexible specialisation.

The flexible specialisation thesis predicted quite dramatic economic and political change within the advanced industrial economies, which would in fact do away with the kinds of divisions inherited in a system of mechanised mass production that took place at the beginning of the 20th century.

Piore & Sabel (1984) argued that the divisions of labour were developed in response to Fordist circumstances and depended on the balance of political forces of the time. They predicted that with the new set of circumstances emerging, that of technological sophistication and reorganisation of work, the kinds of divisions would disappear. This is in sharp contrast to the Regulationists who predicted new forms of divisions rather than the disappearance of the divisions.

In response to the economic crisis, capitalist economies started the process of technological readjustment and financial restructuring as well as the reorganisation of work and the labour market. This has brought a shift from fordism to post-fordism (Piore and Sabel 1984).

Piore & Sabel (1984)'s flexible specialisation thesis stresses the importance of flexible automation technologies for increases in quantity and variety of manufactured products. Multi-skilled workers are required where tasks go beyond manufacture and maintenance and include product improvement. In this new model, there would be a shift from low-cost mass production to a high quality, computer-based manufacture.

A case was also made in the model of flexible specialisation for the empowerment of workers in the labour market. They proposed a modernised form of craft production where successful firms would be more flexible and have specialisations, and would be able to compete with other small producers within the segments of society. Piore & Sabel (ibid.) cited industrial districts in Central and Northern Italy of defined

communities with extended family structures within an artisan workplace where government supports both co-operation and competition among small firms. Such a labour process would facilitate relations of 'solidarity and communitarianism' (pp. 278).

The dominance of the market is at the centre of Piore and Sabel's work, where as with the Regulation School, technology was the driving force for change. Piore and Sabel stress the economic success set within a beneficial market, which provokes the necessity of collaboration and moral association with people.

As will be shown later in this study, empowerment, emancipation, equity and social justice have been on the agenda for the democratic movement in South Africa since the early 1990s.

However, the vision of the Italian artisan workplace cited by Piore and Sabel, received many criticisms from some authors and commentators. Among the critics, Murray (1987) pointed out that

one of its virtues for firms of all sizes is the overall labour flexibility it provides and racial, gender and skill divisions are essential to the operation of this economic model (pp. 88)

Murray's empirical study of small Italian firms has shown that mass production continues and that the firms are still subject to the domination of the international economy by large and multinational companies. The point here is that the system of production proposed still depended on gender and skill divisions of the past. As has been highlighted before, the empirical evidence from the South African metal industry (Maller and Dwolatsky 1993) exposes the incoherence of a rigid model of post-Fordism in South African manufacturing. Maller and Dwolatsky's work has shown that some characteristics of the Fordist, post-Fordist and the Japanese management were all evident in South African manufacturing, although the post-Fordist model has impacted upon South African production in a very limited way (ibid.).

Block (1985) has also expressed a number of concerns associated with Piore and Sabel's thesis. The first was the fact that Piore and Sabel were mainly concerned with changes that were taking place in the manufacturing sector, ignoring other sectors like the service industries. The second was that Piore and Sabel's prediction that changes in technology would restore full employment was highly problematic. In fact, the rate of unemployment is increasing with an increase in technology advancement.

However, despite some of the criticisms presented above, Piore and Sabel's model is often generalised across all nations and all sectors of the labour market as a vision of a democratic workplace of the future where workers and capital both benefit (Young 1998). It was this particular reading of post-Fordism that has informed the guiding philosophy of the mass democratic movement in South Africa in their pursuit of alternatives to replace the fragmented Apartheid education and training system (ibid.).

The Japanese Model

This school theorises any changes in the organisation of work, which Japan followed after the crumble of Fordism. Some researchers of the Japanese management strategies (see for example Florida and Kenny 1991) argue that the Japanese model has been accepted in the organisation and administration of work and the education industry internationally, replacing the Fordist model of the previous era. Japan is seen as having removed the legacies of the past and as having developed new strategies that have improved the conditions of the workers and the quality of products produced (Watkins 1994). The principles of Fordism have been replaced in the Japanese model by work teams, learning by doing, job rotation, quality circles, job redesign, flexible production and other practices to reduce the effects of estrangement evident in more traditional work situations (Florida and Kenny 1991). The aim of these practices was to promote greater flexibility among workers. This meant that workers could perform a variety of tasks and be more productive and

profitable. The question is whether workers could cope with the demands of flexibility and this brings debates about the role of education and training in providing the skills and knowledge requirements needed by industry.

The use of flexible technology in the Japanese model has taken away the duties of middle managers and supervisors who had overseen the control of workers (Watkins 1994). Control has been incorporated in the way the technology has been designed and programmed. In addition to that, salaries were individually negotiated between workers and management, and workers were required to continuously demonstrate their usefulness to the company (ibid.).

Many commentators (Cole 1989; Pollert 1991) have criticised the Japanese model arguing that these Japanese practices, such as individuated salaries and incentives, were typical of Taylor's 'Principles of Scientific Management'. While strategies such as quality circles and group work may involve workers in decision-making, Watkins (1994) argued that the position does not herald the establishment of workplace democracy, thereby putting Piore and Sabel's predictions into question. It would appear that any changes in the organisation of work that follow the Japanese model of management maybe of more benefit to the bosses than to workers (ibid.).

The New Times approach

This theory suggests that the organised capitalism characterised by the Fordist system of mass production is coming to an end (Lash and Urry 1987). They pointed to deindustrialisation and the growth of transnationals, which has resulted in the national accumulation of capital being put at risk and the decline of blue-collar workers. This decline has affected the power of trade union movement, reflected in individuated salary contracts and wage bargaining at plant level.

This theory equates the organised capitalism with modernity, while the predicted end of the national economy is perceived as a manifestation of post modernity (ibid.). The proponents of the New Times approach assert that post-Fordism is not only an

economic process but also a cultural phenomenon. They stress that the decline in the traditional struggles found in capitalist societies has paved way to greater fragmentation and pluralism, the emergence of new identities associated with work flexibility and the increasing of individual choices (ibid.). This approach has been criticised (Levidow 1990) for painting a soft picture of the workplace without putting into consideration the forces and inequalities of power, which help mould the way technology is used.

The Globalisation Theory

Globalisation has emerged as a topic of great interest used in social sciences, amongst management experts, journalists, politicians and the wider public (Held and McGrew 2000). Even though globalisation is one of the most discussed topics in the contemporary world, it is not a well-defined concept. There are several different interpretations presented in the contemporary research literature about the nature and extent of globalisation. This means that there is no single universally agreed definition of globalisation, and this makes it very difficult to assess in more detail the ways in which globalisation has an impact on education and training.

In its blanket form (Ohmae 1995; Waters 1995), the globalisation theory predicts the end of the national economy and the end of the nation state. While the New Times approach views the end of the national economy as a manifestation of post modernity, the globalisation theory perceives it as a manifestation of globalisation.

Globalisation is usually defined primarily with reference to developments in science and technology, communication, information processing and increasing cross-border flows of goods, services, capital, ideas, culture and labour that have made the world appear smaller and more interconnected in very many ways (Featherstone 1990; Giddens 1990; Held et al 1999). Castells (2001: 3) argues that globalisation “refers to media, to information systems, to international institutions and to the networking of states”. Robertson (1992: 8) suggested that globalisation “refers both to the

compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”.

Albrow (1997: 88) defines globalisation as the “diffusion of practices, values and technology that have an influence on people’s lives world-wide”. Also Ozga and Lingard (2006) understand globalisation ‘as blurring distinctions between the international and the domestic, the global and the local’ (2006: 1), and the emergence of the borderless world (Ohmae 1995). As shall be shown later, the implications of all this for education and training are great.

In contrast, the sceptics (Hirst and Thompson, 1996) argue that genuine globalisation does not exist and that the present forms of globalisation are the outcome of international politics and policies by the major nation-states, the so called triad of Western Europe, North America and Japan, rather than technology or market imperatives. Advocates of this school of thought argue that the economy is becoming more international and not more global, in the sense that global interactions are taking place between national economies. Hirst and Thompson (1996) challenge the core tenets of “globalisation” by arguing that today’s “internationalised” economy is not unprecedented, but rather, in some respects, “less open and integrated than the regime that prevailed from 1870 to 1914”.

Based on data showing that trade, investment, and financial flows remain concentrated in Europe, Japan and North America, Hirst and Thompson (1996) concluded that globalisation and economic internationalisation are primarily Western projects and that their main objective is to sustain the primacy of the West in world affairs. In this view, global capitalism has established rules of trade that do not serve the interests of the poorer people in the world. In the words of Tikly (2001: 153), “global capitalism has led to greater polarisation between the developed and the developing countries”.

Regarding the issue of the heterogeneous spread of globalisation across the world, Castells (1996) correctly observes that the global economy is not meant to encompass the entire earth. Rather, it comprises only certain segments of activity in

both developed and developing countries. As Hallak puts it, there are 'those who globalise, those who are globalised and those who are left out by globalisation' (2000: 25). This uneven geographical and social impact of globalisation is leading to new patterns of global inequalities (Hoogvelt 2001). This account of globalisation, especially because of its reference to the increased divisions in society across the globe, is going to be relevant in the analysis of the impact of globalisation on education and training.

There is also the transformationalist approach to globalisation (Held et al 1999; Giddens 1990; Castells 1996) which is not so much about the celebration or the condemnation of global capitalism but rather the changing processes that come with globalisation. This school of thought tries to take a wide view of globalisation and in doing so move beyond the pro/anti terms of the 1990s debate. At the heart of the transformationalist approach is a conviction that, at the dawn of a new millennium, globalisation is a central driving force behind the rapid social, political and economic changes that are reshaping modern societies and the world order. According to them, states and societies across the globe are experiencing a process of profound change as they try to adapt to a more interconnected but highly uncertain world. They see globalisation as a powerful transformative force. This approach, however, questions whether we are entering a truly globalized economy. Although globalisation has reduced the sense of isolation felt in many developing countries and has given the access to knowledge through for example Internet communication, it has not brought the promised economic benefits. In the words of Held and his co-authors, globalisation has resulted in greater division and fragmentation in which "some states, societies and communities are becoming increasingly enmeshed in the global order while others are becoming increasingly marginalised" (Held et al., 1999: 8). Like the sceptics, transformationalists believe that contemporary globalisation is reconstituting or re-engineering the power, functions and authority of national governments (Held et al. 1999, 8). Accordingly, nation states are no longer the sole centres or the principal formats of governance or authority in the world because authority has become increasingly diffused among public and private agencies at the local, national, regional and global levels (Held et al. 1999).

Even though different theorists and commentators differ on what counts as globalisation, they seem to agree in that it is changing the nature of the world in which we live in economic, political and cultural ways. Robertson (1992) argues both that there are objective changes taking place and that an effect of these changes is that people's subjective views of the world and their place within it is changing. Some of these objective changes refer to:

- Rapid increase in speed of communication and contact made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and air travel, compressing time and perceived space
- Expanded and more rapid flows of capital investments, share purchases, currency exchanges, made possible by advances in ICTs
- Global organisation of production through Trans-National Corporations (TNCs) and development of a global culture symbolised by brands such as Coca-Cola, Nike and McDonalds
- Growth in international and regional co-operation and supra-national organisations, such as: World Trade Organisation (WTO), United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) European Union and African Union
- Acceleration of worldwide social and leisure activities, for example in sport, tourism (United Nations Development Programme 1997).

This has led to, as Held et al put it, a 'widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual' (1999: 2).

At the economic level, the particular reading of globalisation within right-wing politics has been the establishment of a global marketplace marked by free trade and minimum of regulation. This inevitable and/or desirable dimension relates to the call

'to liberalise national and global markets in the belief that free flows of trade and information will produce the best outcome for growth and human welfare' (UNDP 1997: 82).

In the same sense, Wiseman (1995) characterises globalisation as a:

Contested trend towards more interdependent, local, national and Trans-national economies and societies, the expansion of international trade, investment, production of financial flows, the growing significance of regional trading blocs and trade agreements, more influential roles for international financial institutions and transnational corporations, far greater mobility of capital-particularly financial capital-and the overall spread of highly commodified and individualised economic, social and cultural relations into ever more spheres of human activity (p. 5).

This is the pattern of global economic restructuring, which emerged in the late 70s that went hand in hand with the implementation of neoliberal policies in many countries. Some of the orthodoxies of neo-liberalism include the free flow of capital and opening up of markets, privatisation of state assets, decrease of state intervention in the economy and deregulation of the economy, cutting public expenditure for social services and the flexible work organisation and labour processes. Arguably, the implementation of neoliberal policies has resulted in state withdrawal from its responsibility to provide public services to promote social justice. Governments have placed a lot of faith in the market with the hope that economic growth would generate a spillover to the poor or that private charity organisation would help out (Burbules and Torres 2000). Contrary to Piore and Sabel's prediction, the globalisation of the economy has produced economic integration on a world scale, while workers and other vulnerable groups have become more fragmented and divided.

The devolution of economic power to the private sector requires additional explanation. Privatisation policies are crucial elements of the reforms oriented towards promoting markets and as such, they are an important policy tool for neo-liberalism. Greater emphasis of the private sector in economic policy making will give employers the best positions to identify their own training needs and the type of qualifications relevant to needs of the labour market. It follows that employers will be able to define qualifications in their own interests, and in this case, in terms of

occupational standards (Young 2005). The need for a career structure, grade and levels follows from these arguments.

The point to make here is that while many people in South Africa are waiting for the NQF to deliver the equity and redistributive goals, they need to take cognisance of the fact that these qualification driven reforms with their origins in neo-liberalism have economic goals as their core business.

Another economic aspect of globalisation is the presence and influence of international and transnational agencies (such as the IMF, World Bank and OECD). The agencies constitute 'a complex and ungovernable web of relationships that extends beyond the nation state' (Waters 1995: 113). It has been noted (Lingard 2000) that these bodies support neoliberal economic agendas on a global scale, uninterrupted by national boundaries. It is often these major organisations that establish educational standards and require systems to be organised in ways that they can measure. For example, Morrow and Torres (2000) noted that the OECD has developed 'certification teams' to assess the research capacities and needs in universities in developing countries, 'and their recommendations carry substantial weight in local funding, accreditation and institutional evaluation (p. 42). This point will help to explain policy convergence, a subject, which will be discussed later in chapter.

Morrow and Torres (2000) noted that the principle of training for the globalised economy is key to the neoliberal reform agenda for post-compulsory education and training. The image of the new worker suggested by post-Fordist theory, requires one who is 'capable of high level of autonomy and group participation linked to broadly based skills training' (p. 46). The key point here is that capital needs flexible workers, and the desire of national systems to capture or attract capital through its appropriately certificated/trained workers is central to the agenda for post-compulsory education and training.

The political aspect of globalisation focuses on the constraints on nation state policy making posed by the influence of international and transnational bodies (Reich 1991; Edwards 1994). This chapter rejects the 'end of the nation state' argument in the face of globalisation; rather supports the view that the state still retains some capacity, but now works in new public management styles beyond old forms of administration (Dale 1997; Green 1997; Lingard 2000; Ozga and Lingard 2006). As shall be shown later, the South African government has remained powerful especially in deciding the policy direction in which the national qualifications framework is taking.

In contrast to the somewhat pessimistic outpouring of the end of the nation-states in respect to their role in shaping their education systems, Green (1997) states that such arguments are far too extreme. He argued that the current neo-liberal fashion toward marketisation and privatisation may have led to the devolution of decision making in education either to the regional or local level, but not necessarily to the end of state control over the aims of education and the role and work of key players in the system. Governments have retained their control over national curricula, assessment and certification and also exert control through performance-based funding. Other accountability measures tend to be introduced when direct administration controls have been relaxed for a period of time.

Green (1997: 171) argued that national education systems have become more porous in recent years through increased student and staff mobility, through policy borrowing and through attempts to enhance the dimension of curricula at secondary and higher levels, but he adds that "rather than a full-scale globalisation of education, the evidence suggests a partial internationalisation of education systems which falls far short of an end to national education per se".

While the growth of global economic and political networks mark two important dimensions of globalisation, some commentators have emphasised the power of the cultural aspect of globalisation in creating a global society (Castells 1996; Dale 1999; Hall 1991; Lingard 2000; Ozga and Lingard 2006; Robertson 1992). This perspective argues that the flow of information including knowledge and skills in a global system must be understood as a cultural-bound process, including the

adaptations made by the myriad of values, skills and attitudes found at different levels in the receiving society. For example, Hall (1991) looked at the process of how the global articulates with the local and insisted upon a view of globalisation that recognises the inevitability of persistent multiplicity and diversity among cultures rather than the inevitability of bland homogenisation. This analysis looks at how global processes are indigenised and mediated by various local contextual factors including the particular political, historical and economic context. This culturalist lens also endorses Robertson's assertion that

we have come increasingly to recognise that while economic matters are of tremendous importance in relations between societies and in various forms of transnational relations, those matters are increasingly subject to cultural contingencies and cultural coding. Even more relevant in the present context, it is becoming more and more apparent that no matter how much the issue of 'naked' national self-interest may enter into the interactions of nations there are still crucial issues of a basically cultural nature which structure and shape most relations, from the hostile to the friendly, between nationally organised societies (Robertson 1992: 4)

At the same time Dale argues that

Globalisation is not a homogeneous process, nor its effects homogeneous and that the effects of globalisation are mediated in complex ways by existing national patterns and structures, summarised as the societal and the cultural effect (Dale 1999:3)

Dale pointed out that these effects of globalisation are mediated and modified by constraints and possibilities in local contexts including historically embedded beliefs and politics. The interplay between the global and the local will inform the analysis of this research.

It is important to keep in mind the idea that globalisation emerged as a result of fundamental changes in the organisation of economic, political and social systems within advanced industrial economies, and eventually evolved into financial institutions and agreements still dominated by industrial countries mainly the West. Moreover, many non-industrial countries have adopted and emulated policies from the West in order to look modern, to gain wider legitimacy and to foster international competitiveness in a globalised economy (Chisholm and Fuller 1996). As these policies are implemented in the recipient country, they are transformed and shaped

within national and local contexts (Ball 1998), in what Lingard (2000: 81) referred to as 'vernacular globalisation':

Vernacular globalisation in this sense carries resonances with the idea of glocalization: the way local, national, and global interrelationships are being reconstituted, but mediated by the history of the local and the national and by politics, as well as by hybridization, an important resulting cultural feature of the multidirectional flows of cultural globalization and the tension between homogenization and heterogenization.

According to Lingard (*ibid*), old notions of centre/periphery and north/south are collapsed in overlapping communities, with multiple centres across the globe and people from the periphery flowing to these centres in a variety of ways. Policy makers and academics of the global south participate in global networks with their counterparts in the global north, producing a rebalance of national and global functions (Ozga and Lingard 2006).

After delineating different theoretical approaches to interpreting the process of economic restructuring and global re-organisation of work that took place in the early 80s, the next section sketches out various implications for education and training associated with those theoretical approaches.

Implications for education and training associated with post-Fordism

For the purposes of this thesis, the educational implications of the Piore and Sabel's win-win scenario, where education produces individual trade/craft workers with high levels of skills to compete in the consumer market, will be sketched out. This will be coupled with the New Times, postmodern and globalisation approaches to education.

As has been explained earlier, Piore and Sabel's model argues that the collapse of mass production will generate a flexible specialisation and highly skilled workers along with greater individual freedom in the workplace. For education, this meant that schools had to produce highly skilled and technologically literate craftworkers.

Piore and Sabel's model was applied (Young 1998) with a futuristic view to education and training, suggesting that educational and social inequalities were being sustained by academic and vocational divisions and between school and non-school knowledge. Young argued that these divisions were creating barriers to learning and were based on the 'curriculum of the past' (ibid.). The vision for the 'curriculum for the future' was to do away with the academic and vocational divisions within the education and training system. The idea of unified systems of education and training emerged out of this particular thinking. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Team (Finegold et al. 1990) made similar arguments for integration of education and training in the UK. Young's (1992) contribution to the debates in South Africa was based on Piore and Sabel's model and on the kinds of analyses that were developed in the IPPR Report. Later, it will be shown in chapter six that the trade union movement in South Africa and other democratic forces were proposing education and training policy options that were based on Piore and Sabel's model of flexible specialisation. Piore and Sabel's philosophy of democratic participation fitted well with that of the democratic movement in South Africa, who were looking for alternative policies that would remove the divisions inherited from apartheid. It will also be shown that the development of a comprehensive and seamless qualifications framework by SAQA in South Africa, starting from 1996, was based on the philosophy of democratic participation.

As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, the basis of Piore and Sabel's vision of a post-Fordist society has been severely criticised and the Regulation School, which perceived post-Fordism as a new form of hierarchical divisions, provided an alternative view. It has also been argued that globalisation has brought new kinds of divisions in society than the promised benefits and in part,

this requires making a sharp distinction between academic and vocational routes, thus reversing previous movements against streaming and tracking, developed in the name of educational equity (Morrow and Torres 2000: 46).

The point here is that the benefits of autonomy and participation presumed by Piore and Sabel do not hold and it has been argued by Soucek (1996) that:

Post-Fordist flexibility is thus a double-edged weapon-on the one hand, it promises worker autonomy, democratic participation and training; and on the other, it tends to deliver those promises in packages whose contents do not correspond to the attached labels. Worker autonomy has thus become a willingness to work harder, democratic means to think of new ways of intensifying labour effort, and training has come to mean to learn less about more (Quoted in Morrow and Torres 2000: 47).

Morrow and Torres (*ibid.*) went on to argue that to restructure education and training on the basis of such inadequate assumptions about the post-Fordist work place, may not serve the interests of the workers and of the society in general, but may be in the immediate interest of capital. In other words, it is the economy that would be at the heart of these reforms rather than social justice goals. This is the position that this thesis is taking. However, it does not support a sharp distinction between academic and vocational routes; but rather the principle of commonality and difference. That is to say, while academic and vocational may remain in distinct tracks, they may be linked in areas where they share common interests.

Implications of globalisation for education and training

There has been and continues to be an enormous amount of discussion concerning the impact of contemporary globalisation on the structures and processes of education and training around the world. Part of this debate concerns the difficulties of differentiating the implications for education of the processes of globalisation and those of neo-liberalism, the dominant political and ideological current of the era of globalisation. This global ideology is being promoted by transnational organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organisation and OECD. In this sense Carnoy (1999) suggests that, while the direct impact of globalisation on education and training (curriculum and pedagogy) has been minimal in many countries, viewing the process of globalisation from a much wider level of economic restructuring and associated dominant economic ideologies points to major influences on education systems more generally.

Many educational theorists who have written about globalisation within a transformationalist framework have supported this view. This includes the work of

Brown & Lauder (1997); Ball (1998); Green (1999); Jones (1998); Dale (1999) and others. Dale (1999)'s theoretical framework for analysing the nature of states's policy response to global trends is useful here. Dale's framework serves to illustrate the degree to which the state has helped to drive the process of globalisation. According to Dale (1999: 2) "the effects of globalisation on education are largely indirect...they are mediated through the effect of globalisation on the discretion and direction of nation states". What Dale is saying is that it is the result of the policies adopted by nation states in response to globalisation that affects education, rather than a direct effect of globalisation.

We have seen from the previous sections of this chapter that in response to the economic crisis of the late 1960s and 1970s, countries started the process of economic restructuring and global re-organisation of work. These changes were aimed at increasing productivity and economic competitiveness in the global market. The changes in the global organisation of work have given education and training system new challenges (Green 1999). The first relates to the need to cut public expenditure in education in order to attract foreign investment and to encourage competitiveness. This has resulted in tight budgets in the provision of education and training, which have forced institutions to be more cost effective. In the second place, there has been a considerable demand for highly skilled and flexible workforces to assist countries to compete in the globalised economy. This meant the promotion of wide ranging of skills is seen to be important in modern work environment. These skills may include the ability to work in teams, solve problems, communicate well, apply knowledge and skills in different contexts and to think creatively (ibid.).

This economic rationality of education has been criticised by authors such as Henry et al (1999) and Taylor et al (1997) who argued that education in both developed and developing countries is focussing towards economic goals to the detriment of other and broader purposes of education. One comment was:

What these developments have done is to change the very focus of educational practices away from social and cultural concerns to those of individuals and the economies in which they participate (Taylor et al, 1997).

The promotion of social and personal skills for sustainable livelihoods is not being emphasised. With particular reference to developing countries, just a small proportion of young people are gaining university education, the rest are marginalised. Much broader purposes and inclusive strategies are encouraged on the policy agenda if nations are to prosper economically. The balance between the economic purposes of education and those of social justice is called for.

In South Africa, an attempt has been made since the end of apartheid to marry the economic strategies with tendencies of redistribution and redress. Donaldson (1997), an advocate of the government's conservative macro-economic strategy called GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), describes its rationale as follows:

Against the background of a weakening Rand and deteriorating investor confidence, the strategy focuses strongly on the need to enhance the international competitiveness of the economy (p. 447)

In the same breath, GEAR is linked to:

Improvements in the quality of schooling available to the poor and greater equity in the flow of students through secondary and tertiary education..foundations for both long-term economic growth and income redistribution (ibid. p. 449).

Also the first White Paper on Education (Department of Education 1995) developed a set of proposals about dealing with inequalities and imbalances inherited from apartheid through new education policies for schools. The big question is whether the balance between the economic goals for international competitiveness and those that favour the most marginalised in post apartheid South Africa has been achieved. Many commentators have argued that there has been a swing from redistributive goals to those of the economy. For example, Allais (2003) argued that it is the economic imperatives that are winning out in place of the disadvantaged. The research carried out by Jansen et al. (1999) on the implementation of 'outcomes based education' in grade one classrooms has shown that white schools have the

resources and means to meet the requirements of this initiative while black schools are extremely limited.

Another important issue that needs to be discussed here is the persistence of high levels of unemployment and social exclusion for both youth and adults in both developed and developing countries, which have increased high levels of uncertainty, risk and plurality. The transition from school to work and adult life come into question. These arise from economic and demographic change and from the wider impact of globalisation processes discussed above. These problems of out of school and out of employment youth pose challenges for education and training. These different groups of people need a diversity and flexible education and training system to meet their contextual situations, differences in race, gender and so on. The need for multiple pathways, 'but pathways which are all valued and recognised and which allow young people to change courses and progress' through the education and training system followed from these arguments (Green 1999: 59). As we shall see later, the problem in post-apartheid South Africa was that it did not construct an education and training system that would cater for the different groups of people learning in school and outside schools and in non-formal education situations. Instead, a one-size-fits all-comprehensive mass production qualifications framework was constructed that did not work in practice.

One of the contested issues in the literature of globalisation is in relation to the convergence between national education and training systems. Green (1999) argued that whilst education and training system across the globe remain national 'they may nevertheless be experiencing a degree of convergence under the impact of international forces' (p. 56). He distinguished between policy convergence and structural convergence: Policy convergence occurs when policy goals in many countries become increasingly similar; structural convergence is where the structures and design principles become more similar.

In this context Green (*ibid.*) suggests three ways in which aspect of education and training systems may converge: The first is through policy borrowing; the second is

through the influence of transnational organisations seeking to promote harmonisation in the provision of education and training; the third is through the response of national governments to similar problems. It will be shown that the second and third factors have had an influence in policy borrowing among countries, the subject, which the following section will focus.

Educational Policy Borrowing

There is a growing literature that explores the interplay between policy borrowing and globalisation (Schriewer 2000) or the degree to which the borrowed policy is internalised or indigenised (Phillips and Ochs 2003; Steiner-Khamasi and Quist 2000). Borrowing ideas or educational transfer from one national context to another has developed alongside the increasing globalisation of the world economy. As early as the 1980s both developed and less developed economies have sought to look more closely at what they regard as more efficient and effective practices adopted in other countries in pursuit of economic competitive in their response to a world economic crisis.

Many scholars have engaged in the study of international convergence of educational systems as a mean of examining the process of educational transfer. Most of them have relied on transnational transfer to explain the politics of policy borrowing and explain why countries borrow from each other (Dale 1999; Halpin and Tryona 1995; Phillips 1989; 1992; 2000; 2004; Phillips and Ochs 2003; 2004a,b; Ochs and Phillips 2002; Spreen 2000; Steiner-Khamasi 2000). These scholars tend to use educational transfer as a means of understanding globalisation.

Some have preferred to use the term 'travelling and embedded policy' to refer to the movement of ideas and practices across international borders (Ozga 2005; Ozga and Jones 2006; Silova 2005). This is a relatively new concept being introduced in the literature of policy transfer and its focus has been the rate and degree of adoption as well as the deceptiveness of the travelling policy in local contexts (Steiner-Khamasi et al 2006). A key issue about 'travelling and embedded policy' is that a certain kind

of policy discourse is decontextualised and pursued by key agents who operate as policy brokers or a 'magistrature of influence' (Lawn and Lingard 2002). Embedded policy can be responsive to travelling policy or it can be a mediated factor that draws on support from social movements, unions. This approach might be useful in the context of South Africa since there were key trade union and social movements who were driving the agenda for integrating education and training, drawing on both local and global experiences.

Some researchers have paid attention to processes of local adaptation and internalisation of borrowed policies (Anderson-Levitt 2003; Schriewer and Martinez 2004; Steiner-Khamasi and Quist 2000). This line of approach is important as it tells us how a global reform such as the development of qualification frameworks is interpreted differently in different contexts. This reinforces what we have seen in previous sections about the need to give consideration to the cultural aspect of globalisation in order to understand the process of policy transfer.

There is scarce literature to back the claims that policy borrowing is sometimes used to reinforce existing practices apart from Steiner-Khamasi and Quist's findings (Steiner-Khamasi and Quist 2000) and another case (the outcomes-based education reform in Mongolia) (Steiner-Khamasi et al. 2006). This thesis is going to present an additional case (South Africa) where the introduction of an NQF in the policy debates of the 1990s merely reinforced the ideas that were in place for over a decade. This is an important contribution since policy borrowing in South Africa has always been justified as a replacement strategy in a country that has undergone political change. The thesis will also show that there was sectoral transfer of ideas between the trade unions and the National Training Board in South Africa in the early 1990s.

Still others warn us of some of the problems associated with borrowing ideas from abroad that can be experienced as a result of the failure to understand the institutional context within which the borrowed policy was effective or not effective (Green 1991; Raffe and Rumberger 1992; Robertson and Waltman 1992). In other words countries need to use lessons from abroad as warnings against taking certain actions. Thus



Raffe and Rumberger (1992) suggested that 'it may be more useful to talk about learning than about borrowing' (p. 155).

The following section will review some of above literature in more detail in order to have a clear understanding of why and how countries borrow from each other and then describe those processes of 'cross-national attraction' in education that constitute policy borrowing. In conclusion, it will draw the main themes that would be applicable in understanding the trajectory of South Africa's NQF.

Borrowing: methods and analysis

Various authors have used the term policy borrowing, differently referring to it as 'coping', 'reproduction', 'transfer', 'appropriation', 'importing' and 'travelling policy' (Finegold et al. 1992; Ozga 2005; Ozga and Jones 2006; Phillips 2000; Silova 2005). The preferred term for this thesis is policy transfer, which will be used interchangeable with policy borrowing.

The notions of educational transfer in the literature can be traced back to the early 19th century through the work of Jullien de Paris (Phillips 1992). Jullien's understanding of educational transfer was based on the premise that education was an independent aspect of social reality that could be analysed separately from its socio-historical context (ibid.). This meant that educational ideas from one country were capable of being simply transported to the next without essential regard to the context.

This vision was challenged at the turn of the century with the work of Michael Sadler. In a lecture at the Guildford Educational Conference in 1990, Sadler raised the question, 'How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?'⁴ (Sadler 1900, in: Higginson 1979). His answer was opposite to what was offered by Jullien a century ago.

⁴ For a specialised collection of the work of Sir Michael Sadler, see J.H. Higginson (compiler). *Selection from Michael Sadler: Studies in World Citizenship*

Sadler emphasised the importance of socio-historical context in the shaping of educational institutions and practices. He argued that parts of an education system could not simply be transplanted without taking the context into account:

In studying foreign systems of education we should not forget that the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside. We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties and of 'battles long ago' (ibid. : 49).

Sadler's warnings suggest that piecemeal borrowing of individual educational practices was impractical, and even when possible, unwise. He noted that educational systems should be seen as a system of schools. When studying foreign systems of education 'we must not keep our eyes on the brick and mortar institutions, nor on the teachers and pupils only' (ibid. :49). On the contrary, the fundamental task in studying foreign education was to understand what is the 'intangible, impalpable, spiritual force' which upholds the school system. This is what Raffae (2003b) later referred to as 'institutional'⁵ logics of any educational policy.

While policy borrowing might in many cases be feasible, it does not have to be the prime purpose of examining education elsewhere. As to what foreign models might teach us, Michael Sadler argued that:

The practical purpose of studying, in a spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own (Sadler 1900, in: Higginson 1979: 50).

The point here is that foreign examples inform home situations. They throw new light, they challenge assumptions and open up new possibilities, even if no borrowing takes place.

⁵ this refers to the social, political and institutional contexts, the divisions, power relations and interests that constitute them and the role they will play in how any reform is implemented.

We have seen two contrasting views towards educational transfer in the literature until the 1960s. One view, represented by Jullien, suggested that educational transfer was desirable and possible. On the contrary, from the other point of view that is represented by Sadler educational transfer was neither possible nor desirable. While Sadler's account is very important, it should be read with caution since he was working in a pre-globalised environment and so the flows of influence, pressures and ideas were very different.

In the 1960s, approaches shifted from debates about whether educational transfer was possible or not, to the search for ways that would guarantee the success of educational transfer and, later to discussions about how the processes of educational transfer could be understood (Cowen 1981).

These issues were followed up lately by authors such Phillips and Ochs (2003), Schriewer (2000), and Steiner-Khamasi (2000, 2002). These authors have examined how the borrowing of educational models from a target country serves to legitimise controversial changes in the home country. They have also considered how policy borrowing occurs when policy makers use the language of reform programs from elsewhere to justify the solutions in the documents they produce. Similarly, Lynch (1998) uses the phrase 'flags of convenience' to show how policy makers use particular global language of education to attract attention and/or international funding. Overall, these authors stress that borrowed ideas or practices are resisted, modified or indigenised as they are implemented in the recipient country. These authors suggest that educational transfer is not unproblematic and, therefore, that the consequences of transfer are not predictable.

This analysis is applicable in a country like South Africa which had undergone a period of transition and has been trying to position itself in the international community. The policy strategy during this transition period was to borrow and seek the advice of international consultants in order to legitimise the integration of education and training through a qualifications framework.

Policy documents produced during the period of transition and after the elections used a lot of international references and policy advocates made numerous visits to other countries' education and training systems. In this way, international trends provided an argument for what might have been (and indeed became) a controversial and highly contested education and training initiative.

The following section will use the model developed by Ochs and Phillips (2002a,b); Phillips and Ochs (2003) in an attempt to explain the policy borrowing process, from the impulses which spark of the attraction, through the decision making stage, to implementation and the final 'internalisation' of the policy. Even though this model was developed based on British interests in Germany educational provision, it might be applied to instances of policy borrowing in the South Africa context.

As has been noted elsewhere (Chisholm and Fuller 1996; Christie 1996; Christie 1997; Spreen 2004), South Africa's educational reforms present a fascinating case of borrowing, use of international argument⁶ (Schriewer 2000), local contestation and manipulation. Ochs and Phillips (2002a,b) suggest that cross-national attraction that might result in policy borrowing is sparked by a number of stimuli. In examining the South African case, it is clear that all the stimuli listed by Ochs and Phillips played a part in the processes that informed the origins, development and implementation of South Africa's NQF. Briefly, they are: political change, systemic collapse, internal dissatisfaction, negative external evaluation, new configurations and alliances, knowledge and skills innovations, the aftermath of extreme upheaval and economic change. The application of these stimuli to South Africa will be discussed later in Chapter nine.

The first stage of the model presented above identifies a number of impulses that spark off cross-national attraction. To explain the whole policy borrowing process Phillips and Ochs (2004b) identified a set of questions that need to be addressed by policy makers as they look for alternatives from the experiences of other countries

⁶ Reference to international reforms is used to fuel social changes as well as support contested policy developments at home.

The table below summarises these questions

Questions	Issues
<p>Cross-national attraction:</p> <p>What is it that has caused the desire to look for answers to policy problems in the experience of other countries?</p>	<p>What are the common and different educational philosophies of the target and 'home' nations?</p> <p>Are there common goals/ambitions shared by the target and 'home' nation?</p> <p>Which of the foci of cross-national attraction are of interest?</p>
<p>Decision:</p> <p>To what extent is any educational phenomenon in another country the result of forces particular to that country?</p>	<p>What contextual factors, such as economic, political, historical, cultural, social and demographic have moulded the policy in the target country?</p>
<p>Implementation:</p> <p>Is the administrative structure such that implementation can be ensured?</p>	<p>What skills are needed for implementation?</p> <p>Are the resources available, or do the resources need to be borrowed?</p> <p>What are the requirements for successful implementation and assessment?</p> <p>How will implementation be financed and sustained?</p> <p>Is partnership required to help implementation?</p>
<p>Internalisation:</p> <p>How far is it feasible to imagine a 'borrowed' policy being implemented in the 'home' context?</p>	<p>Will the infrastructure and resources support the implementation?</p> <p>What factors are necessary to sustain policy in local context?</p>

Table 1 Policy borrowing: four key questions for developing countries

Source: Phillips and Ochs 2004, p. 135; Commonwealth Education Partnership

It will be interesting to see whether sufficient regard was given to some of the above questions in the development and implementation of South Africa's NQF. We will observe that the NQF has not worked well in South Africa because the essential infrastructure was not in place and because insufficient regard was given to the contexts in which the NQF originated.

It is important to note that the four-stage model of policy borrowing postulated by Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004) is never a linear or unidirectional one. The stages are inter-related. The process of decision making can take place at any stage in the model and any newly perceived deficiencies during implementation may spark further impulses for change and the whole process might begin afresh, looking for foreign examples to remedy the situation. This will be an attempt to indigenize or recontextualize the reforms in order to implement the corrections. During this process imported ideas will be translated into local meanings and understandings to foster ownership and legitimacy to a policy initiative. This stage of internalisation is characterised by the vanishing origins of the borrowed ideas (Spreen 2004). Thus, as Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) put it,

policies prescribed by the same paradigm but applied in different contexts produce different practices-so different in some cases-that it is difficult to imagine that they were the result of the same policy (p. 6)

We are going to see that the development and implementation of South Africa's NQF was characterised by strong resistance from key stakeholders who were questioning whether careful consideration was taken with regards to the implications of the integration of education and training in a country plagued by divisions and unequal opportunities. There were increased concerns expressing for example, 'If the model did not work in New Zealand, why should it work here? Current debates in South Africa are concerned about coming up with a version of a homegrown South African Qualifications Framework.

While these stages are very useful for making sense of the overview of the policy borrowing process, there is need to consider the roles of key individuals and institutions that facilitated policy transfer to take place. At every stage of the above model, additional questions will be posed: Who were the key players? What was borrowed and from where? This will complete the picture and provide fine-grained analyses of the multiple layers of interactions that lead in complex ways to the outcomes.

Conclusions

The chapter has attempted to give a brief overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework within which this research is located. It has set out the main arguments surrounding the notion of Fordism and has then attempted to delineate the differing ways that the current changes in relation to the workplace have been interpreted. It has highlighted that in South Africa, the dominant interpretation informing the literature and rhetoric of the democratic movement has been the model of Pore and Sabel. The chapter has argued that Piore and Sabel's model was inadequate, and it presented other alternatives informed by the Regulation School and by globalisation. The chapter has extended the debate on globalisation and included policy borrowing as a tool for illustrating how the globalisation thesis might be understood. Both the literature on globalisation and policy borrowing has shown that whether globalisation in education is real or imagined, policy makers make reference to globalisation and international trends to accelerate educational reform.

Chapter 3: Literature on Unification and Qualifications Frameworks

Introduction and background

It has been shown in Chapter 2 that the idea of unified systems of education and training through qualifications frameworks emerged out of a particular reading of post-Fordism postulated by Piore and Sable (1984). The idea of a national qualifications framework re-surfaced in the mid 1990s (Young 2005) and has been driven by economic, democratic and systemic pressures (Raffe 2003a; 2005). This chapter builds on the previous chapter and sketches out current debates on a range of issues concerning the provision for post-16 education and training with the aim of trying to improve a low performance, divided system of academic and vocational qualifications.

The issue of academic and vocational division raises questions about the purposes of post-compulsory education and training and whether it provides the knowledge and skills people need to improve their economic capital. There has been an increasing awareness among OECD countries that the economic performance of a country depends upon the capacities of its workers, and the effective management of human resources. As Brown and Lauder (1996) noted:

Lessons learnt from Japan and Asian Tigers suggest that the human side of enterprise is now a crucial factor in winning a competitive advantage in the global economy. Advantage is therefore seen to depend upon raising the quality and productivity of human capital. Knowledge, learning, information, and technical competence are the new raw materials of international commerce..(p. 4).

One of the key issues considered to be important in raising the quality and productivity of human capital has been the roles of academic knowledge and vocational training. Ball (1992) distinguished between academic knowledge and vocational training as follows:

Academic education tends to mean study that is theoretical, learning-related (implying that the purpose of an academic course is to proceed to further study), liberal (implying an open ended purpose), norm-referenced (implying competition with others, rather than achievement of specific objectives) and general (or broad). Vocational training, by contrast, tends to imply learning that is practical, work-related, instrumental (implying definite objectives), criterion-referenced (implying the achievement of specific skills or knowledge) and specific (or narrow). The first set of terms carries a higher perceived value than the second group (p. 15-16).

Academic education has always been accorded higher status than vocational education. Academic learning has traditionally been linked to the more able minority who would progress to higher education and vocational training was for the less able majority associated with low skill workforce. The changes in the labour market and the increasing demand of high skill levels has fuelled the need for a broader range of educational opportunities for a growing proportion of school going age and policy responses which focus on vocational education and training. As Conyer (1993) noted:

Analytically, this call for closer relations between historically distinct institutions and programmes is justified in terms of economic demand for higher level qualifications in the workplace, by pressures from educational systems for more openness and coherence of educational structures and pathways, and by the pedagogical arguments in favour of 'integrated learning', that is, meaningful combinations of practical, theoretical, academic and vocational learning (p. 66)

In the same vein, many commentators (Bowman 1988; Finegold et al 1990; Wirth 1994; Young 1992) have seen the divide between the academic and vocational as no longer sustainable, and needed to be bridged. As Wirth (1994) noted:

The gulf between the cultures of the academic and vocational educators continues to be a major obstacle. But the need for serious efforts at academic/vocational integration is now so great that we cannot accept the old excuses (p. 599).

In South Africa the debates on the integration of education and training since the early 1990s were dominated by the history of apartheid and the injustices it had left behind. Democratic pressures encourage the creation of more accessible and flexible learning pathways, the pursuit of parity of status between academic and vocational

subjects, the provision of opportunities for access and progression, and the explicit recognition of skills that have been traditionally been undervalued or ignored.

Systemic pressures refer to the measures of coordination and coherence of interdependent education and training systems (Raffe 2005). They encourage systems of regulation and control, funding and quality assurance, parity of esteem between different learning pathways, and support articulation and progression within the delivery system.

One of the measures by which academic/vocational integration can be effected is through qualifications frameworks.

National qualifications frameworks

National qualifications frameworks are an example of a trend which Raffe et al (1998), Raffe (1993; 2003) have called unification: the bringing closer together of academic education and vocational training. Unification refers to initiatives that are introduced within post-secondary education and training system with a purpose of either achieving complete integration of academic and vocational learning, or achieving modest changes (curricular or organisational) which bring them slightly closer together. The aim of these initiatives is to reduce the distance between academic and vocational learning, but vary with respect to the distance which they are trying to reduce. Raffe (2003a) identifies three types of unifying measures which bring academic and vocational learning closer together: curricular, organisational and longitudinal. Each of these types will be discussed in turn. According to Raffe (2005), these unifying measures may not always involve qualifications frameworks.

Curricular unification

The aim of this measure is to unify academic and vocational curricula. This can be achieved through what Raffe (ibib.) describes as an additive approach or an integrative approach. An additive approach encourages 'greater mixing of academic and vocational components, but does not try to blur the differences between them' (p. 51). This means that the system will have a pool of both academic and vocational courses and students are encouraged to choose mixed courses. An integrative approach goes beyond just mixing academic and vocational courses. In this approach, a new curriculum needs to be developed, for example in the German dual system (Ertl 2002), which aims to exploit the potential of vocational training for general education. An integrative approach may also be achieved by introducing key skills as elements in both vocational and academic programmes. In South Africa key skills are known as critical crossfield outcomes.

Organisational unification

This type aims to reduce the organisational distance between academic vocational learning. This applies to multi-track systems or pathways such as vocational or academic. Organisational unification links these tracks together or reduces the differences between them by creating bridges between them. Portability between these pathways would be possible across bridges. Organisational unification may also blur the differences between pathways, like what the South African qualifications framework attempted to do. This may involve the setting up of certification systems, which emphasises the equivalency of academic and vocational learning by using common vocabulary and levels for describing all qualifications, for example the proposed over-arching diploma in England or the qualifications frameworks being developed in many countries. We will examine this initiative later in this section. Organisational unification may also be achieved through modularisation, credit transfer arrangements and through bridging courses (Raffe 2003a). The proposals in the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) are a good example of organisational unification. Organisation unification may also be achieved by bringing

academic and vocational training under one ministry, like the proposed Department of Education and Training for the Republic of South Africa in 1994 (NTB 1994).

Longitudinal unification

This type aims to reduce the vocational and academic learning distance longitudinally, 'in order to provide flexible, seamless opportunities for access and progression in lifelong learning' (Raffe 2003a: 53). In this type of unification, learning may be available in a variety of contexts and in flexible forms with no age barriers. This may involve qualifications frameworks to assist in transferring credits from one learning context to the other and to facilitate mobility between academic and vocational training programmes.

For the purpose of this thesis, the following concepts are used interchangeably: integration and unification, vocational education and vocational training, and academic and general.

Drawing from Raffe's (ibid.) typology, this thesis will treat an integrated system of education and training as system that has achieved curricular, organisational and longitudinal unification in the following terms: education and training under one department, no academic and vocational distinction and a common curriculum. The combinations of the above terms will be varied in an integrated approach.

As highlighted above, some of the policy initiatives that attempt to bring academic education and vocational training together may involve qualifications frameworks, and it is the discussion that we now turn to.

National qualifications frameworks-A global phenomenon

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) are structures for developing, describing, classifying and registering qualifications according to a set of nationally agreed standards or criteria for levels of learning (Young 2003, 2005). Whilst a qualification system broadly encompasses the combination of all qualifications available in a country and the institutions and processes that support their provision, a qualifications framework is defined by distinctive ways of developing, describing and systematizing the relationships between qualifications. In an NQF, qualifications consist of a set nationally agreed standards and are provided on the basis of obtaining expected learning outcomes stipulated by these standards.

A second way in which a qualifications framework differs from a traditional qualifications system is that gaining a qualification in a qualifications system is associated with specific forms of provision, such as specific learning time, place, or instructions of particular education and training institutions. Gaining a qualification in an NQF on the other hand is no longer associated with what goes into the learning and yields a pattern of lifelong learning that is not bound by time or location but which can support different settings of learning whether school, university, the workplace or in civic or personal life.

A third difference is that in the traditional qualifications system, the development of qualifications depend on specific needs, which are usually related to selection of employment or a guarantee of quality of work (Young 2005). This has resulted in some sectors or levels having fewer qualifications than others or non-at all. In contrast, a qualifications framework implies a matrix of possible qualifications and helps to identify gaps in the matrix. It may encourage gaps to be filled whether or not there is a demand. The implications of these differences will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Qualifications frameworks make hierarchical distinctions between qualifications and classify them by levels, each with its distinct level descriptor. The vertical structure

is complemented by a horizontal structure that subdivides qualifications of the same level into different types and then assigns them accordingly. Individual qualifications are classified on the basis of level descriptors, which specify degree of complexity and the qualification's content.

Qualifications frameworks have been developed in a number of countries, primarily Anglophone countries of the Commonwealth, starting in the mid-1980s. The interest in qualifications frameworks extended to countries in other parts of the world including Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe. The development of qualifications frameworks can definitely be called a global phenomenon (Young 2003), which suggests that they are a response to global rather than just local pressures (Young 2002).

Why are governments interested in reforming qualifications?

We have seen an increasing interest in qualifications in the policies of national governments due to the widespread acceptance that qualifications are the best lever for achieving reform and responding to the economic challenges of globalisation (Young 2002). A focus on qualifications appeals to governments because they provide incentives for lifelong learning and can be used as instruments for making educational institutions accountable when linked to the funding of educational institutions. Qualifications provide an ideal mechanism for monitoring, controlling and providing evidence that educational budgets are being used cost effectively. Qualifications driven reforms are generally approved by national governments because there are seen as a mechanism for widening opportunities, boosting qualifications in an area with a pronounced national need, or for a group traditionally severely under-represented in attaining qualifications, and extending participation in education and training. The critique is that while qualifications are claimed to provide incentives for lifelong learning, the danger is that when qualifications are linked to how institutions are funded, then learning that is not directly related to qualifications may be neglected. Young (2001), argued that if people need to become

lifelong learners it is the learning that is not immediately linked to qualifications that is important.

Another issue is that an over-emphasis on qualifications, especially those that are expressed in terms of outcomes and less emphasis to the processes of teaching and learning and institutional development does little to promote genuine educational opportunities and may even distort educational priorities.

The motivation behind the development of qualifications frameworks differs from country to country. In the cases of the UK and New Zealand, Phillips (1998, 2003) and Young (2005) noted that qualifications frameworks have been developed in the context of the emerging neo-liberal economic policies of the 1980s and early 1990s. This thesis will also show that South African capitalism has been undergoing similar global economic changes in the late 1970s to early 1980s. These economic changes have prompted the South African government to make proposals for reforming its qualifications system. We will see that de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) proposed some form of curricular and organisational unification, when it called for some linkages between formal and nonformal education and training sectors. The report went further and made a recommendation for a further investigation into the establishment of a certification council for the recognition of qualifications in both formal and nonformal education and training sectors. The thesis argues that even though the reforms proposed in South Africa in the early 1980s did not involve a qualifications framework at that time, they became building blocks of a NQF that emerged in the early 1990s and consolidated in 1994.

In the UK for example, the initial motivation behind the first framework for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) was to open access to acquiring vocational qualifications for unqualified school leavers who were on youth training schemes (Young 2005). These unqualified school leavers were associated with unskilled manual labour and hence the need to upgrade their skills.

In South Africa, a common view is that the motivation behind the introduction of the NQF was in connection with the general overhaul of the apartheid education and training and redressing imbalances inherited from apartheid. This thesis presents a different perspective and argues that the initial motivation was in connection with economic problems and its development was incremental rather a sharp break from the past.

More recently, the development of qualifications have been linked to the idea of lifelong learning across OECD countries and beyond (ibid.). This development was an attempt to encourage people to see qualifying as a process that continues throughout their adult lives and not just as something associated with initial education and training. It was also meant to encourage informal learning, to promote linkages between it and formal learning and improve opportunities for people to use their informal learning to gain recognised qualifications (OECD 2005).

Qualifications frameworks have overlapping goals, which appear to be shared across different countries. The two most common goals, which all-national qualifications frameworks target, are to:

- Make qualifications transparent ('make sense') for users, learners and potential employers so that the former know what they have to learn and the latter know what they can expect;
- Enable flexibility and transferability between different occupational and educational sectors and between learning values and, in doing so, eliminate barriers to progression that block horizontal and vertical paths (Young 2003).

Besides these goals, national qualifications can serve other purposes as well. They can:

- Foster the more rational design and development of qualifications;
- Make it easier for government to steer skills development;

- Facilitate educational mobility through the use of credit transfer;
- Enhance international comparability of qualifications;
- Development of a community of trust, towards a mission of social reconstruction

Young (2003, 2005) identifies assumptions on which NQFs are based. These are

- It is possible to describe all qualifications using one single set of descriptors.
- A single set of levels is sufficient for depicting all qualifications.
- All qualifications can be described and assessed in terms of learning outcomes, regardless of the context in which learning has occurred.
- All qualifications can, in principle, be organised in units or unit standards for which a certain amount of learning can be assumed and corresponding credits can be granted. Furthermore, they can be assigned to the proper level within the qualifications hierarchy with the help of descriptors.
- National qualifications frameworks provide the foundation for a learner-centred system of education and training. NQFs open up options for individuals and, in doing so, assign them responsibility for organising their own learning.

There is no doubt that these assumptions have far reaching implications for the overall organisation of education and training. This section discusses the implications of some of these assumptions and the barriers to unification.

The most important and the most pronounced in debates in several countries is the assumption about equivalency. In other words, qualifications frameworks treat all qualifications, academic, vocational, school, university and professional as equivalent. All qualifications are classified in a single framework and they have to comply with a single generic definition of what a qualification is. In many countries, notably New Zealand and South Africa, higher education has resisted the inclusion of its qualifications into a framework based on a single set of criteria for all qualifications. Commentators (Ensor 2003; Mikuta 2002; Young 2005) have argued that such assumptions raise wider questions about the nature of knowledge and pedagogy, because different forms of knowledge⁷ are based on different epistemologies (what counts as knowledge) and knowledge acquisition is context dependent. According to this view, education and training represent different structures of knowledge and different learning modes, and therefore cannot be classified within a single framework. Furthermore, Ensor (2003) points out that education and training are based on different symbolic structures and modes of social organisations, which cannot be regarded as equivalent. Distinguishing between education and training, Ensor (ibid.) argues that education is provided by expert educators who are based in institutional sites and deal with hierarchically organised structures of knowledge. In contrast, training takes an instrumental view of knowledge and knowledge in training is segmentally organised, which can 'most often be broken up into smaller units for the purposes of teaching and learning' (p. 340). This suits training to the unit standards methods of packaging and specifying the outcomes.

The assumptions underlying the unit standards methodology are that knowledge can be broken into small units, each of which can be described by learning outcomes and assessment criteria. It does not matter by whom, where and how these units get taught and learnt. Its common sense that quality of learning is dependent on the context and processes under which learning takes place, including good teachers,

⁷ Different types of knowledge can be distinguished:

Factual knowledge: know what;

Theoretical knowledge: know why;

Technical knowledge: know how;

Networking knowledge: know who (OECD 1996: 12).

small class sizes and resources. The specification of knowledge in terms of outcomes has been criticised by the education sector, arguing that the nature of educational learning is open ended and is supposed to prepare learners for an unknown rather than a known future because of the changes that are being brought by globalisation and high technology.

Critiques from higher education of this unit standards methodology, have pointed out that it is incompatible with the holistic nature of educational knowledge (Ensor 2003; Young 2005).

The second barrier to integration is political. As argued by Young (2005), national qualifications frameworks attempt 'a revolutionary not an evolutionary change' (p. 13). They are variously used as a means of ensuring commonality and consistence, with respect to content of qualifications, to extend government control of education and training, to regulate the allocation of government funding in order to ensure that government goals are being met, and to promote equity and social justice goals (ibid.; OECD 2004; Raffe 2005). It follows that implementing an NQF is likely to face resistance as they may be seen to challenge established day-to-day practices and power structures.

In South Africa, political barriers to integration were more pronounced given the fact that instead of the envisaged single department prior to the first democratic elections, two separate departments represented the different interests of education and training. However, it should be emphasised that even if a single department of education and training was established, many of the epistemological barriers described above were not going to disappear.

However, the creation of a single department of education and training was going to ease tension and was going to enable the perspectives and interests of formal education to impact and inform skills development and vice versa.

The third barrier is institutional. One of the key problems with the development and implementation of qualifications frameworks is that they are divorced from the institutions that deliver the qualifications. An over-emphasis of outcomes and standards, and less emphasis on institutional development render qualifications frameworks ineffective. This is what Raffe (2003) referred to as intrinsic and institutional logics of educational policy. While the intrinsic logic may promote flexibility, portability and progression, the institutional logic may act as barriers through funding regulations and traditions. Drawing from a MSc research (Mukora 2003), it was found out that some institutions lacked the necessary resources both human and financial in order to implement the NQF effectively. A lack of resources themselves may be a barrier to integration (Raffe 2005).

It has been argued by Raffe (*ibid.*) that political and institutional barriers are aggravated by the nature of academic and vocational qualifications. Academic qualifications have been traditionally accorded high status and a higher positional value than vocational qualifications. It follows that measures that attempt to raise the status and value of vocational qualifications are resisted by institutions which deliver academic qualifications and by people who achieve them. The argument is that raising the value of vocational qualifications threatens to undermine the status of academic qualification, and this may help to explain why resistance to integration from the academic sector has been more pronounced and more powerful.

Some advocates for the integration of education and training, such as Raffe (2003b, 2005), accept that the epistemological issues and other barriers to integration being raised are real and important. However, he argues that some of these issues may have more to do with a particular type of a qualification framework rather than with integration as such, a discussion that we now turn to.

International variations in qualifications frameworks

We have seen from the above considerations that qualifications frameworks can be a vital tool for bringing education and training much closer together. Drawing from Raffe (2003b), qualifications frameworks vary across countries with respect to their motivation, scope, strength, policy breadth and history. These variations can be used to locate qualifications frameworks in the global context. We have already seen how qualifications frameworks vary with respect to their motivation.

The scope of the framework refers to the sectors of education and training which are included. These sectors include secondary schools, vocational education and training providers (including enterprises which offer significant training programmes), and higher education. Some qualifications frameworks may include all the sectors of education and training, like the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the South African Qualifications Framework (NQF). For the purposes of this thesis, these qualifications frameworks will be described as being comprehensive. Some qualifications frameworks may be restricted to just one sector, like the framework for vocational qualifications (NVQs) developed in England and these are described as partial frameworks.

The scope the qualifications frameworks may depend on the purposes or motivation of developing them.

The strength of a qualifications framework refers to the 'stringency of the criteria which qualifications have to satisfy in order to be included' (Raffe 2003b: 241). The South African qualifications framework and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework will be used as examples to illustrate this.

The following criteria must be met for a qualification to be included in the South African qualifications framework:

- Represent a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning;

- Add value to the qualifying learner by providing status, recognition, enhancing marketability and employability;
- Provide benefits to society and the economy;
- Comply with the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework;
- Include both specific and critical cross-field outcomes that promote lifelong learning;
- Where applicable, be internationally comparable;
- Incorporate integrated assessment appropriately to ensure that the purpose of the qualifications is achieved. Assessment should include a range of formative and summative assessment methods such as portfolios, simulations, workplace assessments and also written and oral examinations;
- Indicate in the rules governing the award of the qualification that the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through the recognition of prior learning, which concept includes but is not limited to learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal and nonformal learning and work experience (NQAI 2002: 33).

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework have only three criteria that qualifications need to meet to be included. These are:

- Qualifications in the SCQF must be credit-rated, which implies that the volume of learning can be measured;
- Qualifications and credit bearing components of qualifications must also be levelled, assigned to one of the 12 levels of the framework;
- An assessment of the qualifications must be quality-assured (Raffe 2003: 4)

Comparing the two, we can see that the South African Qualifications Framework is more stringent than the SCQF with respect to the number of criteria and the way in which learning outcomes are assessed or specified. In this sense the SCQF will be described as less stringent where as the NQF in South Africa is described as more stringent or a 'strong NQF'. However, the SCQF may also be described as more stringent with respect to its credit-rated criterion. The NQF in South Africa does not include credit yet in its prescriptions.

Qualifications frameworks may also vary with respect to their policy breadth. Raffe (2003b) describes policy breadth as

‘the extent to which the establishment of the framework is directly or explicitly linked with other measures to influence how the framework is used’ (p. 242)

Raffe (1988) and Raffe et al (1994) distinguished what they refer to as the intrinsic logic (the goals of national qualifications frameworks) and the institutional logic (operational means of achieving those goals such as resources, policies of educational institutions to promote credit transfer, funding and regulatory mechanisms and social relations). They argued that if qualifications frameworks are not linked to or complemented by institutional development, they might be ineffective. Most qualifications frameworks have ignored the institutional logics in their development because they are divorced from the context in which learning takes place. Young (2002) also commented that qualifications frameworks that are not supported by social values and communities of trust ‘that link levels, institutions and sectors will not achieve their aims’ (p. 60).

With respect to history, this refers to the timescale and incremental development of a qualifications framework. As a way of illustration, the history of the SCQF may be located in the 16-plus Action Plan, implemented in 1984. Since then, there has been a series of unifying reforms that resulted in the creation of the SCQF starting in 1999 and entering its first development stage in 2000 (see Chapter three for more details). The creation of the SCQF has been therefore incremental (Raffe 2003b). It has been different in South Africa. The history of the NQF in South Africa is commonly associated with the democratic movement starting in the early 1990s, established according to this view, to break away from the past apartheid practices (Allais 2003; DoE and DoL 2002). This thesis presents an alternative perspective on the history of the NQF in South Africa. It goes back to the early 1980s, even before the 16-plus Action Plan was implemented in Scotland. A case is made through the analysis of a series of education and training reforms from the late 1970s and early 1980s and argues that the development of the NQF in South Africa has been incremental rather than a sharp break from the past.

Variations of qualifications frameworks have emerged in individual countries, depending upon how rigorously and fully the particular country follows the dimension of variation illustrated above. There are comprehensive and strong frameworks as well as partial and loose/weak frameworks. The following section shows some examples of national qualifications frameworks.

Examples of national qualifications frameworks

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The development of the SCQF started in the mid 1990s with the aim of constructing a wider framework encompassing all post-compulsory programmes and awards including Higher Still, SCOTCAT⁸ and SVQs (Raffe 2003b). As we have seen in the previous chapter, its development has been incremental. What is unique about the SCQF is the involvement of HE in the origins of the idea and the development of the framework. In actual fact, it is HE, which is leading the SCQF. As we shall see later, this is a remarkable difference to other frameworks like those developed in South Africa and New Zealand where HE has been excluded from the development process.

The SCQF consists of a common language and a framework of credit points and levels for describing qualifications and the relationships between them. The levels of the outcomes of learning and the volume of these outcomes are used to place qualifications in the framework (SCQF 2001). It has 12 levels and covers all stages of education and training. The levels of the SCQF are broad generic levels of outcome. Each level has a descriptor, which sets out in relatively brief, generic terms, the outcomes associated with each level. The levels and the descriptors are designed as a national set of reference points for use by all providers and all

⁸ The Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SCOTCAT) Scheme was established in 1991 as the national credit framework for Higher Education in Scotland, based on credit and levels. It was recognised by all HE institutions and the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA) was set up in 1993 to oversee its implementation.

stakeholders and against which any learning outcomes can be located. The levels range from level 1, catering for students with severe and profound learning difficulties to level 12, doctoral study. Levels are not related directly to period of study. Learners will be able to move across levels or from higher to lower as they take up new qualifications. The volume of the learning outcomes is measured by SCOTCAT points which give them a value. The allocation of points is based on the time an average learner takes to achieve the outcomes at a particular level. In the SCQF, each point corresponds to a notional ten hours of learning time. Credit points are used to help learners to transfer between programmes. Each qualification in the SCQF will be distinguished by the volume of credit required for its award and by its particular purpose and characteristic outcomes (as outlined in the qualification descriptors). Institutions may use the generic descriptors in designing their own programmes or may develop their own level descriptors that reflect the particular purpose of their provision.

The SCQF has been established with the general aims to

- Help people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential
- Enable employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how they relate to each other, and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce (SCQF 2001: vii).

The SCQF is a descriptive framework and not a regulatory one (*ibid.*). This means that it is voluntaristic in the sense that institutions are not compelled to use qualifications that are on the framework. The problem of voluntarism is that the implementation of the framework will be uneven and there is a danger that some will opt out.

On other distinctive feature of the SCQF is its incrementalism (Raffe 2003b). We have seen that the development of the SCQF has build on previous reforms described earlier in this chapter. The SCQF was developed when the building blocks were already in place. Existing qualifications were already in SCQF format and the challenge was to fit the qualifications in the framework. We will see in the cases of New Zealand and South Africa that the development of their frameworks involved a large scale of changing existing qualifications and the cumbersome and bureaucratic standards-setting processes. Raffe (2003) commented that what other countries are trying to do is to develop their frameworks in a single stage the ground which Scotland took over twenty years to cover.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

Before giving an overview of the Australian Qualifications Framework, it is important to describe briefly the qualifications system in Australia. The education and training system in Australia is organised into four sectors: the compulsory sector, which comprise the primary school and lower secondary school (Years 6/7, 7/8-10); upper secondary sector (Years 11 and 12), higher education sector; vocational education and training sector and adult and community education. The award of qualifications in Australia is limited to the post compulsory sector with the exception of a year 10 certificate offered in NSW. The upper secondary awards (upper secondary certificates) articulate horizontally with VET certificates and vertically with VET certificates and diplomas and higher education, mainly degrees (Keating 2003). The awards in the adult and community education are mainly VET and senior secondary certificates. It is important to take note of the fact that the upper secondary certificate in all the eight states and territories is based upon common frameworks and awards with the exception of Victoria where there is provision of an International Baccalaureate in some schools (ibid.).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was introduced in 1995 and was developed out of a meeting of the State, Territory and Commonwealth Education and

Training Ministers with the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). The AQF Advisory Board (AQFAB) was established to protect the AQF qualifications guidelines and to promote and monitor national implementation of the AQF.

The AQF arose out of two developments. The first is the development of the Australian Standards Framework, which was established to align VET awards. The second is related to the increase in the rate of participation in post-secondary in the 1980s, which led to an increase need of articulation and recognition of prior learning.

The purposes of the AQF have been summarised by Keating (2003) as shown in the table below:

1 Equivalency and linkages	Articulation (credit transfer, advanced standing) Recognition of 'systems' Increased flexibility Seamless pathways-lifelong learning ¹
2 Quality control	Quality assurance User confidence-lifelong learning Funding systems
3 Coherence	Equivalency-general and vocational Measurement and comparison of outcomes Core or key skills

Table. National Qualifications Framework, adapted from Keating (2003: 279)

Keating (ibid.) argues that the AQF only performs most of these functions in some sectors especially the VET sector. He points out that the AQF does not share common features with other national frameworks. Officially the AFQ has no levels, has no legislative base, has no authority to accredit and regulate awards and as a result has little impact on higher education and the school sector. The federal structure of the Australian government together with the autonomy of universities has resulted in a fragmented and weak framework in relation to schooling and

universities, both of which have been allowed to opt out. Young (2003) argues that although a weak framework limits opposition, on the other hand it can achieve very little in terms of articulation and progression within the education and training system.

The AQF recognises that higher education sector, vocational education and training sector, and the schools sector each have different types of learning, therefore there are no standardised rankings or equivalencies between qualifications issued in different sectors. Each sector establishes its own qualifications, according to standards relevant to each sector. Where the same qualifications are issued in more than one sector but authorised differently by each sector (e.g. Diploma, Advanced Diploma) they are equivalent qualifications, but sector-differentiated. The table below shows the qualifications grouped according to the sectors in which they are commonly used.

Schools	Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Higher Education
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Advanced Diploma Diploma

Table. The Australian Qualifications Framework, adapted from Byron (2003: 71)

The criteria for defining qualifications are based on flexible set of guidelines, a set of standards established by the relevant accrediting sector. These guidelines are expressed as learning outcomes and include characteristics descriptors, outlining the nature and extent of the learning required of a learner to obtain the qualification.

There are principles for promoting articulation and credit transfer between qualifications in the framework. Qualifications linkages allow flexibility in career planning and lifelong learning. It should be noted that cross-sector qualification linkages are limited to the function of credit transfer between higher education and VET (Byron 2003).

It should be also noted that there is no central accreditation and assessment authority in Australia. The three distinct sectors have their own accreditation arrangements. Qualifications in school are accredited through state government statutory bodies. At national level VET qualifications are accredited through national industrial bodies and at state level, through government agencies. Higher education qualifications are accredited by self-accrediting institutions (universities) and the state government accreditation agencies.

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

The development of the NZQF involved a two-year process of policy development and public consultation. The principle guiding the development of the NQF was that all learning achievements should be recognised, a break away from past practices that allowed only a small proportion of people to gain access to higher learning. The aims of the NQF include:

- Clear learning and career pathways
- Relevant and flexible learning
- Access to learning and portability of recognition
- Quality assured provision and assessment
- Skilled New Zealanders equipped and committed to lifelong learning (Davies 2002: 7)

As we have seen, the NZQA was put in place by legislation to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF. The main function of NZQA as stated in the Education Amendment Act of 1990 was:

To develop a framework for national qualifications in secondary schools and in post-school education and training in which:

- i all qualifications (including pre-vocational courses provided under the ACCESS training scheme) have a purpose and a relationship to each other that students and the public can understand; and
- ii there is a flexible system for the gaining of qualifications, with recognition of competency already achieved (ibid.).

As we can see from the Act, one of the main tasks of the NZQA was to develop a national qualifications framework, which would incorporate all national qualifications irrespective of the provider offering them. The basic building block of each qualification was intended to be a unit standard, or specifications of outcomes students needed to meet in order to gain credit towards a qualification. The intention was to include school-based qualifications, largely academic in orientation, in the framework as well as more vocational qualifications such as those developed by industry training organisations. The main feature of the NQF was that students would be able to accumulate credit irrespective of the site of learning.

The NZQA released a consultation document in March 1991 entitled: *Designing the Framework: A discussion document about restructuring national qualifications* (NZQA 1991), which outlined the main features of the proposed National Qualifications Framework. In the document, overseas experiences were referred to so often especially SCOTVEC, which had an up and running model.

This document proposed that the NQF would have the following features:

- a national catalogue of units of learning written in terms of outcomes and bearing credits towards named qualifications;
- School Certificate subject standing alone (that is, not included in the national catalogue of units);
- senior secondary school units as part of the catalogue and with a credit rating;
- degrees offered by universities and other authorised providers written in learning outcomes terms with specific credit transfer (P. 36).

Another important feature underpinning the NZQF was the notion of levels:

The Qualifications Authority has identified eight levels of learner achievement and suggests these as the basis for proposing a framework for qualifications. The proposed levels have been derived from those proposed in Australia by their National Training Board. All units of learning would be assigned to an appropriate level. The draft descriptions which follow have an employment focus. The Qualifications Authority wishes to broaden these definitions to incorporate general and higher learning (p.12).

The NQF aimed to include all national qualifications within a single, comprehensive framework according to eight levels of increasing complexity of skill and knowledge (i.e certificates, diplomas, degrees and postgraduate degrees).

It should be noted that initially there were eight levels of achievement for NQF qualifications, but this was extended to ten levels in 2001 in order to accommodate postgraduate qualifications (van Rooyen 2003). A qualification must be assigned to one of the ten levels. Each qualification has a definition and this specifies the characteristics of the programme, and the requirements in terms of credit. For each qualification on the register there must be a statement of learning outcomes. This includes the statements about: what the whole qualification represents in terms of the application of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes; and the components of the qualification which, in their combinations, make up the wholeness of the qualification. Due to the controversy surrounding unit standards, the Register requires the registration of whole qualifications only.

Controversy surrounding the development of the NZQF

From the beginning the vision of a single comprehensive framework encountered problems, and the development process was frequently criticised. For example, universities had vigorously argued that the model of learning proposed by NZQA was not appropriate for degree level courses. Their arguments were summed up by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee (NZVCC):

In spite of approving the general intent of the Act, the NZVCC harbours grave doubts as to whether it is practical or desirable for the framework proposed by NZQA to encompass tertiary degrees. In particular, the NZVCC believes that the model for developing and registering unit standards upon which whole qualifications depends is incompatible with the nature and aims of most university courses. Being based on the

notion of competency, the unit standards methodology makes insufficient allowance for the progressive development of conceptual skills that is characteristic of university education (NZVCC 1994: 2).

The universities were not the only ones that had concerns about the NQF. There was a sharp division between educators supportive of the idea of integration and parity of status between academic and vocational subjects and those who did not want to see the existing system of examinations devalued (Philips 1998, 2002). By mid-1997 the Ministry of Education acknowledged that there were significant problems with the NQF. The government's revised thinking on qualifications policy was set out in the Ministry of Education's Green Paper entitled *A Future Qualification Policy for New Zealand: A Plan for the National Qualifications Framework* (Ministry of Education 1997)

Pedagogical and educational concerns previously identified by some academics (Hall 1995, Smithers 1997), such as implementing a system based exclusively on unit standards across all subjects and all providers, were also acknowledged in the Green Paper. Users expressed concerns over the excessive amount of work required to develop and assess unit standards and teachers complained about the atomisation of knowledge and skills into almost meaningless clumps (Ministry of Education 1997).

Mounting public criticism and the concerns expressed by the Ministry of Education resulted in changes being proposed to the NQF. Some of the crucial changes to the original design of the NZQF were the removal from NZQA of the development of school qualifications and the removal of the university sector from the framework (Philips 2003; Young 2003). By taking away the responsibility of developing unit standards for schools from the NZQA, the Ministry of Education regained its control over issues of curriculum development. It was realised that the needs of education and training sectors are different and therefore had to be recognised differently. This is not to dismiss the importance of the links between them, which can still be established without compromising their differences.

Conclusion

The chapter has sketched out the issues surrounding the unification/integration debates and discussed the barriers, problems and sources of opposition. It has pointed out that unifying strategies may involve qualifications frameworks to assist credit transfer and mobility within education and training system. It has also pointed out that the barriers discussed may have to do with the design issues and purposes of qualifications frameworks rather than with integration as such. A qualifications framework that sought to introduce change of a revolutionary nature and expressed in very ambitious terms tends to face stronger opposition than those that are modest in ambition and of an evolutionary nature.

Chapter 4: Reforms on education and training: An International Perspective

Introduction

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the basis of Piore and Sabel's vision of a post-Fordist society has influenced debates on the integration of education and training. The general arguments of Piore and Sabel's view of the post-Fordist economy stress the need for a more highly skilled workforce whose high level competencies generate greater responsibility and cooperation leading to workplace democracy. This chapter shows examples of reform initiatives that took a highly vocational position concerned with an upgrading of the competencies and skills which young people need to acquire in schools. It will draw examples from developments in England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand since the late 1980s. The objective is not to analyse all the reforms on education and training in the four countries in sequence, but rather to select those which seem to have most influenced the debates in South Africa. The strategy is to review different models of outcomes-based and/or competency based qualifications and the criticisms, problems and resistance that they encountered in the four countries highlighted above.

The chapter focuses on two main issues from England's reforms. The first draws on England's experience with NVQs, which has influenced the model that has been adopted in South Africa. The second is the Dearing Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds published in March 1996. This review is important because of its failure to break down the basic tripartite pathway divisions of the qualification structure within the ET system. These are the three learning pathways that have been proposed in the Consultative Document published by the Departments of Education and Labour in 2003.

From Scotland's experience, the chapter focuses on a series of unifying reforms that created the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. This is important because the NQF model that seems to work is the Scottish model and its development has

been incremental. The thesis draws on Scotland's experience to argue that the development of the NQF in South Africa has also been incremental.

What is significant about Australia is its competency movement that attracted the South African trade union movement in the early 1990s. This will be the main focus on Australian reforms. The New Zealand's qualifications framework has influenced the operations of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the NQF in South Africa. The reforms that led to the establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework will be discussed.

The context: post-compulsory education and training in England-a matter of public and political debate in the late 1980s

The late 1980s has witnessed intense public and political debate about every aspect of the education and training (ET) system in the UK. The complaints have been directed to the poor quality and non-vocational direction of the school system, the small numbers of the age cohort at 16 staying on in full-time study, the content and direction of university courses, the absence of continued training of those at work, the lack of adult retraining provision, and skill shortages. One theme which runs throughout these debates is the need to adapt ET systems to the growing international competition and economic as well as technological changes. These changes were triggered off by the world economic recession of the 1970s. Crucial in meeting this problem was the availability of a highly trained and flexible labour force which had the capacity to adopt to major changes in the economic environment (Finegold and Soskice 1988; White 1988; Young 1992).

There was considerable agreement about lower productivity in the UK relative to other European countries because of the absence of a well educated and trained workforce that has made it difficult for industry to respond to new economic conditions (Green and Steedman 1993; Steedman and Wagner 1987). Finegold and Soskice claimed that the UK was caught

in a low-skills equilibrium, in which the majority of enterprises staffed by poorly trained managers and workers produce low-quality goods and services (1988: 22)

It has been suggested that the main causes of this problem were the then education and training practices, which were too rigid, it was claimed, producing a range of skills which were too narrow to meet the needs of industry (ibid).

Similar arguments were offered by Green (1998) who examined the concept of core skills within the English context. He pointed to the historic lack of linkages between vocational education and training and general education and argued that

Alone amongst the major European nations in the 19th century, England developed a technical and vocational education that had no inherent connection with general education and schooling. Whilst on the Continent, particularly France and German speaking states, the typical form of vocational training was state sponsored trade school, which combined workshop training with systematic instruction in vocational theory and general education, in England, with its voluntarist traditions, there were few such schools and vocational education, as opposed to skills training, had to evolve in an ad hoc and relatively unsupported fashion. The normative model of skills training in 19th century England was provided by the apprenticeship which was essentially practical, employment-based and marginalised from mainstream education. It involved no general education and often little vocational theory (p. 24-25)

It can be observed that the English VET lacked the foundation of general education and the notion that technical mastery requires abstract knowledge and an understanding of theory. The system lacked coherence and there was a sharp divide between academic and vocational education, with vocational students not taking general education. Technical and work-related subjects were regarded as inferior in relation to academic subjects.

Workplace training also suffered from similar institutional constraints which kept Britain in a low-skills equilibrium. These constraints ranged from factors such as lack of political intervention⁹ on the ET field, and then, when policy makers did push

⁹ The use of ET to improve economic performance failed to emerge on the political agenda in Britain throughout the post-war period. The consensus between the Labour Party and the Conservatives was to focus on expanding educational provision leaving training to industry. However, the two parties differed in the reasons of their positions. The Labour Party saw vocational and technical education as incompatible with the drive for comprehensive schooling and the party's dependence on trade union

for ET change, their progress was hindered by 'the weakness of the central bureaucracy in both education and training fields' (Finegold and Soskice 1988: 25). The industrial/firm structure and the structure, traditions, and common practices of British industrial relations have also undermined attempts to improve the skills of the workforce (p. 29). These traditions include the lack of statutory compulsion for employers to provide training for young employers in skilled occupations and lack of statutory rights for adult workers to training leave. Firms were under no obligations to link jobs and pay with qualifications (Green and Sakamoto 2001).

Lack of statutory regulations and unregulated labour markets make employers unsecured to invest in training of employees they may lose to rival employers (*ibid.*).

We will see in chapters 5 and 6 that some of the causes of skills shortage in Britain were the same causes that affected South Africa in the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Having discussed some of the causes of skill shortages in Britain, the next section now examines the ET policies that have been advanced as offering a solution. There was a general agreement among different interest groups¹⁰ that major improvements in the ET sector were a vital prerequisite for the nation's economic performance (Keep and Mayhew 1988). The Confederation of British Industry (1989) for example noted that 'to maintain and improve Britain's position in an increasingly competitive world nothing short of a skills revolution is required' (p. 9). As White (1988) demonstrates, the government has been engaged in a reconstruction of educational provision and emphasised vocationalising the curriculum.

These challenges of skill shortages as well as deepening economic recession and the dramatic rise in youth unemployment caused the Thatcher administration to reassess its non-interventionist training stance. This change in direction of training provision produced a major Manpower Services Commission's (1981) New Training Initiative

support meant little interference on union's control over training in industry. For the Conservatives, the priority was the drive for grammar schooling and their belief in the free market ideology prevented any attempts to intervene in the training sphere (Finegold and Soskice 1988: 25).

¹⁰ These include the main political parties, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the National Economic Development Office (NEDO) (Keep and Mayhew 1988:9)

(NTI). The agenda of the NTI included three broad objectives: the revision of the apprenticeship system, provision for youth unemployment and revision of training opportunities for adults (Finegold and Soskice 1988; Keep and Mayhew 1988). In the same year, South Africa also introduced significant changes to its labour and training legislation, which resulted in the passage of the Manpower Training Act of 1981.

The rapid increase in youth unemployment prompted the British government officials to be preoccupied with provision of the unemployed, but without a significant increase in public spending (Macfarlane 1993; Green 1997). As a result, the development and provision of work-based, short duration training with the aim of equipping young people with minimum skills level in order to enter employment rapidly became attractive. The provision for long-duration initial training apprenticeship system was seen as incompatible with the emerging new economy because of its limited focus on certain occupations and its bias towards young males.

At the secondary school level, the major ET reform was the introduction of the school based 14-18 Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in 1982 by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). This was the first attempt by the Thatcher Administration to increase the relevance of what is taught in schools to the world of work, through the development of a technically and vocationally-oriented curriculum, new forms of teacher training and assessment for fourteen to eighteen age group (Finegold and Soskice 1988). The main objective of this initiative was to increase the number of pupils staying on in full-time education after compulsory school-leaving age. This initiative was viewed as providing an alternative route for the majority of students who were not progressing into higher education. What is striking is the move to give the MSC responsibility for TVEI in place of further education and the then Department of Education and Science. The message to further education was clear: to meet the challenges of the new era, there should be a shift from the old style day and block release (part of a long-duration initial training) to a focussed, employer led provision.

The Department of Education and Science (DES) extended these developments to the Further Education (FE) sector in 1985 with the introduction of the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE). This programme was designed for students who were not prepared to take A-levels but wished to stay on in full-time education. This programme was also aimed at showing that 'there is another line of development that is equally respectable and desirable which leads to vocational qualifications' (p. 32).

The setting up of the 1986 Review of Vocational Qualifications working group by the government followed these developments. This review identified a number of shortcomings which have been summarised by Jessup (1991) as follows:

It is now widely recognised that our statutory education provision from age five to sixteen years fails to equip a significant minority of young people with the basic skills for employment, even in rudimentary jobs, for progression to vocational training and for a fulfilling life. Until recently the form of education for 14-16 year-olds, and the examination system at age 16, were designed for the minority who were to continue in full-time education through A levels and university. The provision of education and training is fragmented, resulting in a difficult transition for young people from school to vocational education and training. Progression from vocational education and training to higher education is an even greater problem. Within vocational education and training itself, there exists no overall system, only numerous sub-systems which are constantly changing. The resulting discontinuities and overlaps are wasteful and inefficient, and also discourage people from continuing with education and training, often limiting their career prospects. The problem is confounded by the imposition of unnecessary entry restrictions to programmes and qualifications. These are some of the reasons of our low participation rate (p. 8).

It was recognised that a fundamental re-orientation of ET was needed to meet the demands of the changing world. The review led to the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) with a remit of rationalising and simplifying all the country's training qualifications into five levels as part of a broader strategy to develop an internationally competitive workforce. The Council's task was to define broad guidelines and develop a framework for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) into which the courses for different awarding bodies (e.g., the Business and Technical Education Council or BTEC, the Royal Society of Arts or RSA, and the City and Guilds) could be slotted (Bates 1998; Finegold and Soskice 1988; Jessup 1991).

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

We have seen that the NCVQ was established to rationalise qualifications and make them simpler and clearer through a framework for National Vocational Qualifications. According to the NVQ criteria and procedures (NCVQ 1989), this new system of qualifications is based on agreed national criteria and levels which underpin all NVQs within a single framework. To be part of the NVQ framework, the qualifications needed to meet the criteria and approval by the NCVQ. We have seen in the previous chapter that South African qualifications needed to satisfy stringent criteria for them to be included in the framework and that they needed to be approved by SAQA.

Jessup (1991) set out the underlying rationale for NVQ as follows:

- outcomes-based qualifications possess high levels of validity, credibility and utility since they are based on the content of work processes.
- for purposes of modern national VET systems it is enough to state desirable outcomes, since these provide the basis for recognition (that someone is competent) and for instruction (these are the outcomes to which the instruction should lead);
- significant benefits accrue from assessment and certification being independent of the mode, location and duration of training, particularly a facility to accredit experienced workers as well as trainees who have qualified through initial VET programmes;
- unitised qualifications allow more accurate and flexible arrangements for recognition of competence since different combinations can be used to construct varying qualifications (Jessup 1991);

The design features of NVQs stem from these rational and were included in NVQ criteria and guidelines (NCVQ 1991) for both the form in which qualification units should take and the nature of the analysis of work processes (functional analysis), which provided the basis for the statements of competence. See Table below.

Characteristic	Requirement
Unit-based qualifications	Analysis which divides occupational competence into discrete units with minimum overlap and duplication
Outcome-oriented	Analysis which does not focus on the processes/activities by which competence is achieved, and allows inference of competence from activities which meet the description
Industry-based	The descriptions should be based on activities as they are actually undertaken in workplaces and should embody industry standards
Performance-based assessment	The descriptions should be capable of supporting devolved performance-based assessment, through observation and questioning, and, in some circumstances, simulations and tests

Table 1. Key design characteristics of NVQs. Adapted from Oates (2004: 57)

The NVQs were introduced at the same period when the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of Employment needed an approach to qualifications which had a better fit with the new short-duration and work-based Youth Training programme. This was traditionally offered by long ‘old-style’ day- and block-release courses leading to qualifications in Further Education Colleges.

The following is a brief summary of some of the main features of NVQs.

One aspect of the NCVQ methodology (NCVQ 1991) is the assumption that all vocational qualifications can be ranked on a single hierarchy that recognises achievements at five levels ranging from semiskilled work (level 1), skilled occupations (level 2), craft or supervisory occupations (level 3), technician or first level management occupations (level 4) and professional or senior management occupations (level 5) (Jessup 1991). Level 4 broadly equates with under-graduate level study and level 5 with post-graduate study.

A second feature of NVQs is that both the learning and assessment provided for are based on the national occupational standards developed for the occupation by the appropriate employer-led standard setting body, the National Training Organisation (NTO), and these are packed into qualifications by awarding bodies. The standards are expressed in terms of learning outcomes, which are specified in terms of elements of competence, performance criteria and range statements. The learning outcomes spell out what the student has to do, and to what standard, in order to obtain credit towards a qualification.

A third feature is that qualifications and standards are not tied to the context in which learning takes place. This context includes the modes or duration of learning and teaching processes, the site and form of provision through which outcomes are achieved. The achievement of most qualifications in the previous system of ET provision tended to be tied to the learning programmes of educational establishments such as schools, colleges and universities and formal systems of apprenticeship. This meant that those who were denied access to such programmes could not gain qualifications and such systems did not recognise the informal learning that takes place outside formal educational institutions. Outcomes-based approaches that are not tied to the site of learning offer a way of overcoming this problem and improving access to previously excluded groups. In theory, this new initiative would allow anyone to apply to have their skills and knowledge assessed at any time. We will see

later that this overemphasis on outcomes and less emphasis on teaching, learning and institutional development necessary for achieving a qualification renders this initiative ineffective. Young (2001) argued that outcomes-based frameworks underplay 'the institutionality of education and training' (p. 54) in claiming that qualifications can be achieved in a variety of contexts.

A fourth feature of the NVQs is that qualifications and standards are designed to meet the needs of specific occupations, but there is an emphasis on portability/transferability of competencies, including Key Skills units (currently offered in communications, information technology, working with number, working with others, improving on learning and performance, problem solving).

A fifth feature is that NVQs are accessible to all sectors of society without necessary barriers to progression and assessment regimes should include the possibility of accrediting prior achievement. They emphasise performance in the workplace in preference to passing knowledge-based examinations.

A sixth feature is that NVQs have a modular unit-based structure, allowing credit accumulation and transfer. The basic assumption is that competence can be unitised or broken down into its constituencies for flexible assembly into the NVQ qualification as a whole. Common units can be used to construct different qualifications and this will enable the movement within the delivery system. For instance one can look at functions that are common to different occupations such as customer services, reception duties, etc where these can be expressed in form of units or standards. The units will then be grouped to form qualifications and when these qualifications share common units then there is an indication of possibilities of transfer and progression between different occupational areas.

A seventh feature is that NVQs do not prescribe the content of what is taught in terms of traditional syllabuses but is rather deduced by practitioners from the learning outcomes. This contrasts with previous forms of curriculum design which

has been based on learning inputs in the form of syllabuses, courses and training specifications.

Arguably, all these features seem to be same features that describe qualifications frameworks that emerged from the early 1990s, including the South African Qualifications Framework (NQF).

We have seen that the NVQs arose both in response to a long-standing need to establish an additional route through post-compulsory education and training and to develop an internationally competitive workforce. Having a competent workforce means that industry is prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world. Wolf (1995) noted that there was no formal, overall post-16 structure for education and training until the establishment of NVQs in 1986. The first NVQs were awarded in 1988. However, by 1990, the new NVQs had attracted a variety of criticisms and bitter controversies (Bates 1995; Matlay and Hyland 1997; Smithers 1997). Some of the criticisms levelled against NVQs will be discussed below.

Criticisms

Most of the problems surrounding the credibility of NVQs can be explained in terms of approaches adopted in its development and implementation, which are underpinned by the competence-based education and training (CBET) model. NVQs are based on a number of basic assumptions, which some of them shall be referred to here. The first is the claim made in the criteria for NVQs: that they should describe occupational competence rather than any other kind of competence (for example, competence in a specific job) and that competence can be described using explicit and transparent descriptions (Jessup 1991). The second is that competence can be broken down or 'unitised' into small parts for flexible assembly into the NVQ qualification as a whole (ibid.). There are a number of problems with these assumptions. It has been questioned (Oates 2004) whether occupational competence can be described by a series of technical statements and it has been argued (ibid.) that when it is so described the competence which is thus assured cannot be reliably and

simply transferred from one setting to an unfamiliar setting. Performance in new settings requires adaptation of concepts which have been developed in other specific settings (Oates and Fettes 1998). This raises questions on the transferability of competencies from one setting to another.

Wolf (1995) who suggests that the attempt to pin down skill specifications result in ever-increasing length and detail but not greater understanding has supported this view. Basing on her work on criterion-referenced assessment, she argues that specifications become unmanageable with teachers and learners confused rather than enlightened and assessment of competence becomes less reliable, the opposite of the desired effect. The 1995-96 Beaumont Review of NVQs (Beaumont 1996) reported difficulties experienced by both teachers and learners in applying generic descriptions of behaviours to particular workplace circumstances. In respect of this, the review detected variable interpretations of NVQ units by different teachers, learners and assessors, due to ambiguities of the generic language. At the very time South Africa was launching SAQA and the NQF, it was already plain that such systems were under attack in the UK.

A second critique originates from the technique, which underpin the descriptions of competence contained in NVQs, the 'functional analysis' model. The process of generating NVQ units of competence and qualifications is by consensus (Jessup 1991) among interested parties, with no one description necessarily being the best. Oates (2004) points the fact that functional analysis is the creation of shared constructs among a specific community rather than a natural quality of performance.

A third critique of NVQs stems from a further characteristic of the qualification: that it is designed to measure competence or outcomes independent of the mode, duration, and location of learning. This has shifted both vocational training and compulsory education from a formation to a competence model. In the former, assessment is formative, providing feedback for learners in order for them to enhance their performance; and there is an emphasis on inputs relating to effective, structured use of learning processes and settings, with assumptions that processes of learning

affect the nature of emerging competence. In the latter, assessment is summative, providing a transparent statement of what someone can do, for certification, selection, etc; and there is an emphasis on outcomes, inferring competence from performance and leaving open the site, mode and period of learning (Oates 2004).

It has been argued that qualifications such as NVQs which ignore purposely the source of competence are likely to be less effective in assessing and conveying technical skills and knowledge than the qualifications they replace (Grugulis 1997, 2002; Keep 1999; Smithers 1993, 1997; Young 2001). Grugulis (2002) notes that Smithers' (1993) work, which contrasts the old City and Guilds plumbing certificate with the plumbing NVQ provides a dramatic illustration of the differences between the two qualifications:

The City and Guilds qualifications not only required a higher level of practical, technical expertise, it also tested knowledge of physics, electronics, maths, technical drawing and technology. The background to technology included physical qualities, electricity and magnetism, forces, pressure, heat, thermal movement, energy, principles of tool construction and materials technology, concepts in chemistry, applied chemistry and materials for industry. The NVQ which replaced it specified none of these. NVQ candidates and tutors could, if they chose, add a syllabus, textbooks, knowledge of theory and additional practical training to the NVQ. But there was nothing in the NVQ itself to suggest that such supplementary material was either desirable or necessary (p. 7)

It is not surprising that outcomes-based qualifications such as NVQs are regarded as narrower than qualifications which are awarded as the examined output of a prescribed period of study or learning according to a prescribed curriculum. Many commentators have argued that NVQs are far too narrow to be capable of supplying the skills and competences required by the innovative firms of the 21st century (Keep 1999; Prais 1991).

A fourth critique associated with the NVQ process is its complex jargon ridden language and bureaucracy, which have restricted NVQ success (Beaumont 1996; Keep 1999). It has been argued that the promised benefits of NVQs such as encouraging more training, removing barriers to learning and simplifying and rationalising the qualification structure have not been fully realised (Keep 1999) and that it had limited impact on training practice and volumes in the majority of

organisations. A wide range of surveys have indicated that employers, who are supposed to be key players in the NVQ process, were largely indifferent to, and ignorant about, the nature and purpose of NVQs (Hyland 1994).

It was realised that the new NVQs were linked with workplace-based rather than full time general vocational preparation and in 1991, the Government White Paper, *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (Department of Education and Science, Department of Employment 1991) announced a new kind of vocational qualification- General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) which were to be linked with broadly based vocational education.

The policy objective of GNVQs has been to provide an alternative route leading to either higher education or directly to employment and the Advanced GNVQ was intended to achieve parity of esteem with A-levels. Hodkinson and Mattinson (1994) noted that the GNVQs were designed to bridge the academic-vocational divide, which has been seen as hampering the development of high quality British workforce. As with NVQs, the GNVQ arose with the objective of shaping not only the development of skills but orientations towards work in preparation for changing conditions in the organisation of work.

While there have been radical and rapid changes in post-16 education and training, Macfarlane (1993) noted that progress has been hampered by the lack of coherent national policies and weakness in the many initiatives designed to change the transition from school to FE or employment. He commented that:

Education for the 16-19 is characterised by deep divisions symptomatic of the society in which we live, divisions between the private and public sectors, the academic and vocational routes to qualification, selective and non-selective systems, and traditional and progressive methods of course delivery and approaches to learning. As a nation we are undecided over whether those aged 16-19 are pupils who require the security of a school community, or students who thrive in a fully adult college environment, or, indeed, whether they are best catered for in an institution designed specifically for their transitional stage of development (p. xii).

These issues raised by Macfarlane and others (e.g., Finegold and Soskice 1988; Green 1991; Young 1993) were taken up in the *Review of Qualifications for 16-19*

Year Olds (Dearing 1996), which recommended the development of a framework for all qualifications for 16-19 year olds simplified into a system of four national levels of achievement. Some of the key recommendations will be discussed below.

Sir Ron Dearing's Review of 16-19 Qualifications

This section now briefly looks at the specific recommendations of Sir Ron Dearing's Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds published in March 1996. What is striking in the review is its failure to break down the basic tripartite pathway divisions of the qualification structure within the ET system. The three pathways are:

- the academic pathway: represented by A/As levels and GCSE, where the focus is on the development of knowledge, understanding and to a lesser extent skills associated with the subject or discipline
- the applied education pathway: represented by GNVQ, where the primary focus is the development and application of knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to the broader area of employment
- the vocational training pathway : represented by NVQs, where the focus is the development and recognition of competence and capability in a trade or profession at the relevant level (p. 137)

The Dearing Review suggested that the distinction between the pathways be clarified and made some proposals for closer linkages between the pathways with the aim of bridging the divisions within the education and training provision. Some of the proposals made were as follows:

Firstly, the review recommended the introduction of Key Skills in all three pathways post 16. These Key Skills were Application of Number, Communication and Information Technology. It should be noted that the Core Skills which were then the NCVQ's 1996 Core Skills taxonomy (Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, Working with Others, Improving own Learning and Performance, Problem Solving, and Self Management of Learning) were not introduced into A-level programmes. The three Key Skills proposed by Sir Ron Dearing were to constitute the 'core' of any learning programme in any qualification pathway. Arguably, a unified qualification framework containing different pathways

within it, must have something to hold them together, some principle of unification-otherwise it will not be seen as unified even if part of a single framework. The assumption made by the Dearing Review was that the unity between the three pathways was going to be provided by the Key Skills regime. This is the assumption that has informed the South African Consultative Document published by the Departments of Education and Labour, which proposed three interdependent learning pathways to be held together by some kind of critical outcomes.

However, some commentators such as Green (1998) have argued that since Core Skills rest on a notion of 'competence', there are at odds with the knowledge-based rationale of academic education. Therefore core skills cannot serve as the basis of a common core for both academic and vocational courses.

Secondly, the Dearing Review proposed a national framework of qualifications. The proposed framework would allocate all qualifications from whatever pathway to four national levels of achievement: Advanced, Intermediate, Foundation and Entry. There will be an overarching National Award achievable through each of the pathways equally. In theory, the pathway itself becomes less significant. For example, the main certificate heading would be National Award, then the level would be specified eg Advanced, then the Awarding Board would be named. Only then would the particular qualification be specified (eg GNVQ Advanced, or A-level, or NVQs at level 3). These proposals would clearly assist with student retention rates particularly through the introduction of Entry Level qualifications, and would provide for more 'life-long' learning opportunities.

Thirdly, the Review recommended the further development of apprenticeships under the new banner of National Traineeships. This provision would offer flexible opportunities for participants of accomplishing the Key Skills to at least level 2, of re-sitting GCSEs, and taking GNVQs as well as NVQs as part of this work related route up to the level of NVQ level 3 and the Modern apprenticeship.

Fourthly, the Review recommended the development of the National Record of Achievement as an overarching vehicle for all learners for developing the Key/Core Skills of planning and managing one's own learning.

Fifthly, the Review recommended developments which would bring together awarding bodies to create joint arrangements for awarding the GCSE, A-level and GNVQ. It was further recommended to bring the work of SCAA and NCVQ into a single statutory body.

However, despite these developments and the implementation of the recommendations in the Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds, this has not led to a single NQF in England (Young 2001). The integration of academic and vocational qualifications has been resisted in England by both the Conservative and Labour governments. Surprisingly, integration at the level of government departments (the Department for Education and the Department of Employment became the Department of Education and Skills), the regulatory authorities (the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications merged into QCA) and the examining bodies merged. It is only the academic and vocational qualifications themselves that were kept separate. Young (*ibid.*) argued that the main reason for this was the political decision not to compromise A-levels as the main access route to university, often referred to as the 'gold standard'. In South Africa, it is the other way round. Integration at the level of government departments was not possible and SAQA attempted to unify academic and vocational qualifications.

Arguably, proposals for the post-16 ET in England were a process of co-ordination of general and vocational education within a common organisational structure rather than unification.

SCOTLAND

The concerns which have been raised in England and Wales in relation to shortages of skills, participation rates at post 16 education and training, increasing unemployment rate and the relevance of the education and training system to the needs of the changing world have also been raised in Scotland. Although there are common trends between England and Scotland, there are also significant differences between the debates in the two countries (Howieson et al 1997). While the introduction of NVQs in England and Wales was provided for by the *Review of Vocational Qualifications in England and Wales* (DES/MSD 1986) and the White Paper-*Working Together: Education and Training* (DoE/DES 1986), in Scotland, no such policy framework exists in legislation (Canning 1998). Given the dominance of UK policy making, political pressure forced Scotland to introduce SVQs with no distinct policy objectives set for them.

In Scotland, the SVQs were introduced later in 1990, the same time South Africa was coming up with alternative proposals for a post-apartheid South Africa. The SVQs were mostly awarded by SCOTVEC and since 1997 by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. It was pointed out (Raffe 2003) that the design of SVQs was identical to NVQs and that many of the criticisms and issues levelled against NVQs apply equally to SVQs.

The section that follows will review the debates and policy developments in Scotland, which do not match exactly the developments described for England. Developments in Scotland can be understood in terms of six phases: the government's 1979 consultative document on 16-18 education (SED 1979); the Action Plan (SED 1983); the SVQs; the 1992 Howie report; the Higher Still: Opportunity for All (SOED 1994) and the development of the SCQF.

The Consultative Document (SED 1979)

As in England, post compulsory provision in Scotland in the late 1970s was comprised of two main distinct tracks: the academic and vocational. The content and mode of study distinguished these two tracks. Generally, academic education was associated with full time study where as vocational courses were mainly studied part time. This period was also characterised by rising youth unemployment, low participation in post 16 education provision and skill shortages in young people entering the labour market. In response to some of these challenges, the Scottish Education Department published in 1979 a Consultative Document, 16-19s in Scotland: the first two years of post-compulsory education (SED 1979). The document noted the inadequacies of the education and training system and that the system did not cater for the wide range of students. The document proposed some courses that should be offered to 16 to 18-year-olds together with the institutional structures to deliver them and invited public comment. According to Howieson et al (1997), the document was well received and the responses reflected a desire to reform.

The Scottish Action Plan

The publication of the SED's 16-18s in Scotland: an action plan in January 1983 followed developments initiated by both the MSC's New Training Initiative (NTI) in 1981 and the school based 14-19 TVEI in 1982, although in Scotland the introduction of TVEI was deferred until 1984 (ibid.). in the early 1980s national Certificate modules were not available in the Scottish education and training system. The implementation of the 16-plus Action Plan in 1984 replaced all non-advanced courses in further education and all non-academic courses for 16-18s in schools were to be replaced with a national system of flexible modular courses of notionally 40 hours length. According to Raffe (1985: 27)

students would have flexibility to construct their own work programmes by choosing appropriate combinations of modules. Some modules would correspond to the common elements of pre-existing courses; others would be more specialist in nature. Colleges

and schools in an area would rationalise provision, and students would be able to cross institutional boundaries in their choice of modules. Students would be able to pick up new modules, and leave or re-join the system, as convenient; the system would offer 'a greater variety of entry and exist point'. Assessment would be criterion-referenced and largely internal.

This led to a single National Certificate awarded by the Scottish Vocational Council (SCOTVEC), which was developed on 1985. The main goal of the Action Plan was to improve participation and to widen opportunities, especially for the less academic ones who opt to stay on after compulsory education. Since Further Education colleges provided most vocational education, the immediate target for of the Action Plan was the reform in the FE sector.

Participation in modules also rose in secondary schools, either as an alternative for low achievers or to complement courses such as Highers (the main qualifications for HE entry). SCOTVEC modules made the system flexible in respect to subject choice and progression as most post-compulsory students took Highers and National Certificate modules in combination, although in different proportions. Although modules increased curriculum flexibility and inhibited the development of well defined tracks within the Scottish education system, these had lower status than Highers due to differences in assessment and pedagogy and they were criticised for providing a fragmented and incoherent system (Croxford et al 1991). These problems were addressed in in 1999 when National Certificate modules were integrated into a broader framework of qualifications in Scotland introduced by Higher Still reforms (see later in this section).

The Howie Committee's proposals and SOED's response

We have seen that the primary focus for the Action Plan was the reform of vocational education and training, and during this period the attention shifted to mainstream academic education. The then existing system (especially upper secondary) was criticised for its failure to cater adequately for the majority of young people entering S5, especially the less academic.

Before Higher Still reforms, entering S5 took Highers¹¹ and/or NC modules which were available in a range of general as well as vocational subjects. Well qualified standard grade students would take five Highers, supplemented by one or two modules and students with weak standard grade attainments took combinations of Highers and modules. Students who opted to stay on to S6 could take a combination of new Highers or re-sit S5 Highers or take NC modules and Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) courses. CSYS was meant to adequately prepare students for independent study at university.

The Howie Committee was appointed in 1990 to review the curriculum and assessment in the 5th and 6th years of secondary education in Scotland (SOED 1994). While the Howie Report of 1992 identified the flexibility and curricular breath in the Scottish post-compulsory education, it also highlighted certain weaknesses in the above arrangements for senior secondary students:

While the Scottish system prides itself on curricular breadth this is not reflected in actual attainments. Substantial numbers of S5/S6 pupils obtain only one or two Highers or non at all. Many thousands leave school without marketable qualifications. Even the more able students display less breadth of attainment than their European counterparts. There are few opportunities for study in depth. The Higher courses are too rushed and represent too steep an incline of difficulty when superimposed on Standard Grade. Many students do not develop effective learning and study skills and are ill-prepared for higher education. Coherent programmes of vocational education are not generally available in S5 and S6. Vocational education still suffers from a lack of esteem and there is an unnecessary academic-vocational divide (SOED 1992: vii).

The Report proposed a twin-track-based reform strategy, based on academic and vocational tracks starting at 15 years. In 1993, the model (tracked system with bridges) was considered in the ANC/COSATU formulations and was rejected. Two distinct qualifications were proposed which would be followed independently by students: the Scottish Certificate (SCOTCERT), a one or two year vocational pathway, and the Scottish Baccalaureate (SCOTBAC), a three-year academic pathway.

¹¹ These are one-year subject-based courses which provided the main qualifications for higher education.

The SCOTCERT would be a lower track starting in the fourth year of secondary education and catering for about 60% of pupils. It would be modular based on GSVQs, with a certificated exit point after one year and covering general education and occupationally relevant core skills.

The SCOTBAC would be the upper track starting in S4 and catering for about 40% for each cohort. It would be based on existing Highers and CSYS courses with the choice of an Arts or a Science line. The Report proposed various ladders and bridges to link the two tracks.

The Report was published in 1992 and responses were invited for by the end of the year. According to Howieson et al (1997), 4500 responses to the Howie Report were received. In general, the Howie Committee's analysis of the weaknesses of the then education system was supported and the need for change was accepted, but the proposal to remove Standard Grade from S4 to S3 and the tracking pathways notion was unacceptable. The principle reasons for condemning tracking were that schools would choose to offer either one or the other kind of course to suit their circumstances thereby breaking away from the Scottish comprehensive school tradition. Due to the low esteem of the lower track, there would be parental pressure on students to enter for SCOTBAC and this would lead to high drop-out or failure rates. The alternative to the tracking system proposed by the Howie Committee was to bring the two tracks together into a unified system. This was the logic of the Higher Still reform, first proposed by the Scottish Office in 1994, and developed by the Higher Still Development Programmes over subsequent years.

The Higher Still reform

Higher Still reform (SOED 1994) represents the Scottish Government's official response to the Howie Committee's recommendations. In essence, what the Higher Still attempted to do was to bring the academic subjects, that were based around the normally one-year Higher courses and Sixth Year Studies courses which followed on

from Highers, with a modular system which was notionally vocational, or in practice general and vocational because it covered a wide range of subjects, which were typically based around 40-hour modules. The Higher Still reform provides units which could be grouped up into courses, which typically comprise four units, which then may be grouped into Scottish Group Awards (SQAs) designed to be achieved within a year of full time study. Where appropriate, core skills were embedded within the curriculum and assessment practices both designed according to a common set of criteria.

One important feature of Higher Still reform is that the modular framework is organised around seven levels: Access 1-3, Intermediate 1-2, Higher and Advanced Higher. The logic behind the reform was the idea that, at the age of 16, instead of choosing between high status academic courses, which have currency and high status but a lot of people would not succeed in them and, on the other hand, low status, vocational modules, which are more accessible but worth little, the intention was to have everyone remain within the mainstream system but join it at the level appropriate which led on from the level of attainment they had reached already. This was to give everybody the opportunity to succeed, hence the subtitle *Opportunity for All*. This was described by Raffe et al (2005) as a climbing frame with flexible entry and exit points.

In theory, the Higher Still framework gave academic and vocational subjects equal status, but there is no evidence in practice to show that there has been a significant increase in the uptake of vocational options, and in particular an increased uptake among brighter students. When that happens, then there is parity of status.

Although the Higher Still reform is broadly supported within the education community, it has received some criticisms, which were precipitated by the 'exams crisis' of 2000, its prescriptiveness and slow implementation in the FE sector who were concerned about acceptability to employers (Howieson et al 2001; Raffe et al 2002; Raffe 2003).

The work by Raffe et al (2005) on the *Impact of a Unified Curriculum and Qualifications System: The Higher Still Reform of Post-16 Education in Scotland* has shown that such frameworks are achievable, and that some of barriers arose from specific design issues. They suggested that the design principles of a comprehensive unified framework should be loose to encourage both diversity and commonality.

Scotland's strategy for unification has been taken up further forward through the development and implementation of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, reviewed in the previous chapter.

AUSTRALIA

As with most countries, so in Australia, there has been concerns about the low retention rates for post-compulsory education and training and increasing rates of unemployment (Finn 1991; Wheeler 1993), the need of core skills and competencies to meet the challenges posed by changes in the world's economy (Dellit 1993; Ducker 1993; Mayer 1992; Randall 1993) and the links between education and training and the world of work.

In Australia, reforms on post-compulsory education and training have been influenced by various developments: strategies engineered by the Hawke/Keating Labour Governments since the early 1980s of corporate management and microeconomic reform geared towards enhancing economic restructuring and competitiveness in the global market; continued shifts in production and labour market requirements, marked by developments in technology, the predominance of the service sector and an increase in unemployment; and an emerging ideological terrain combining an overriding economic rationality with social justice concerns (Sedunary 1996). The creation in 1987 of an integrated Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training and the establishment of the Australian Education Council (AEC), comprised of education ministers of the Commonwealth,

states and territories laid the ground for the alignment of education and vocational training (ibid.).

It should also be noted that the provision of education and training in Australia has been influenced by its federal constitutional structure. Within the federation statutory authority for education and training is located in the six states and two territories that form the Commonwealth of Australia, with the federal government taking some over-arching responsibilities. Each state has its own educational structures and own qualifications, especially school qualifications, and means that any 'national' initiative must be built upon the agreement of the states and territories.

As in other countries in this study, the developments of a set of national curriculum frameworks and outcomes profiles for school education are being addressed in Australia. While these changes are being prompted by the Federal Government, the eight state and territory upper secondary school certificates remain remarkably different in their structure, rules and content.

This section of the chapter will offer a brief historical overview of the development of the Australian Training Reform Agenda, now called the Australian National Training Framework. It will then point to some key features associated with its perceived potential for equity among workers. Finally, it will show the spilling of the competency-based approach out of the training sector to education in the 1990s. Overall, the argument is that these initiatives have been influenced by Piore and Sabel's view of the post-Fordist economy, even though it is not explicitly acknowledged in the reform documents.

Reform of the training sector

In the second half of the 1980s the federal Labour government addressed the economic crisis through policies of structural adjustment. A number of initiatives have occurred which sought to integrate aspects of industry with social and education policy (Taylor and Henry 1994) with the aim to increase the skills of the workforce

and thereby increase productivity and competitiveness, by creating a new flexible, responsive and efficient training system to support the skill needs of industry (Wheeler 1993). Industry protection was reduced, labour markets deregulated and skill formation was encouraged, all in the hope of increasing international competitiveness. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments through the work of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), the National Training Board (NTB), the National Board for Employment Education and Training (NBEET) and its various councils and advisory boards have put the reform agenda in place. This involved:

- a National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT);
- a competency-based approach to training and assessment, including the recognition of prior learning (RPL);
- bringing vocational and general education together, including the development of key competencies; and
- the Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC), a new and unified entry-level training system.

A national system for ensuring consistence in the accreditation of courses and training programmes, and registration of training providers was proposed in 1991 under the auspices of the National Framework for the Recognition of Training. At the same time Adrienne Bird produced a publication known as NUMSA's Vocational Project (Bird 1990).

The NBEET's Employment Skills Formation Council released its report entitled *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System* (the Carmichael Report) in 1992. Building on the Finn Report, the Carmichael Report focussed on changing from a time served system, or the inputs of training programs to the one based on demonstrated competencies. All Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) trainees will be required to achieve standards in the key competencies (Collin 1993). The AVC, a competency-based entry-level training will ensure a flexible structure of training and work experience. This would replace the existing apprenticeship system and traineeships for all industry sectors. The report set as targets that:

By 2001, 90% of 19-years-olds are expected to have finished Year 12, or have finished an initial post-school qualification, or be doing formally recognised education and training;

By 2001, 90% of 20-year-olds are expected to have an AVC level 2, or be proceeding to higher level;

By 2001, 60% of the 22-years-olds are expected to have an AVC level 3, or higher, or be proceeding to a higher qualification (Carmichael 1993).

One of the bodies involved in Australia's competency-based training system was the National Training Board. The NTB noted that competency standards developed must be representative of the industry parties that make up the industry and that there has to be commonality in the form of standards (Wheeler 1993). If every industry was to express its standards in different ways, then national comparability and portability was not going to be possible. The NTB established the Australian Standard Framework to enable comparisons between levels of competency in standards across industries, between industries, and between sectors within industries (*ibid.*). The competency standard was to be expressed in 'units of competency', each of which comprises its constituent elements of competency, together with their associated performance criteria and a range of variables statements (*ibid.*). This is similar to the approach taken by the British National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) as Keating (2003) commented that the competency-based training model was initially borrowed from the UK. Tripartite Industrial Training Councils, comprising employers, unions and training authorities were to be the means of formulating the competency standards for a particular industry sector and submitting them to the NTB for approval.

The Australian Standards Framework (ASF) is a set of eight competency levels with a certificate being broadly at ASF level 1 and 2; basic trade certificate at ASF level 3; post trade certificate at ASF level 4; advanced certificate at ASF level 5; advanced

diploma at ASF level 6; undergraduate degree at ASF level 7 and postgraduate degrees at ASF level 8 (Beevers 1993). It was decided that the development of competency standards would be compulsory in all industries and occupations up to ASF level 6 and that all courses that prepare people for jobs and occupations up to ASF level 6 would be adapted to competency-based training (CBT). Courses for jobs and occupations up to ASF level 6 were basically under the control of Ministers of education and training. This left jobs and occupations at ASF levels 7 and 8 (mainly professions) for which the relevant courses largely resided in universities, which had a certain degree of autonomy. This has left professions at levels 7 and 8 to develop their own competency standards on a voluntary basis and it was also stressed that any uses of these competency standards which universities might make would also be voluntary (Hager 1996). It was speculated that the reasons why the Australia government took the line it adopted in respect to professions and universities was to avoid resistance especially from the university sector at a time when the vice chancellors were in no mood to be further dictated to by government following the merging of institutions to create the new Unified National System of universities (*ibid.*). We will see later that the New Zealand and South African governments who have sought to dictate the universities in this matter have not been successful. It is also interesting to note that CBT was implemented with no involvement or participation of the secondary school sector, therefore only concerned with the VET sector. There was reluctance from the secondary certification authorities to incorporate VET studies in their certificates (Keating 2003).

When the ASF was established, the assumption was that the framework would offer new opportunities for creating more flexible and articulated pathways between education, training and the world of work. However, some critics have argued that the system has offered little facilitation of articulation or credit transfer (Hager 1996). The argument was that the ASF has not actually played a significant part in the implementation of competency-based education and training arrangements because

there has been no conception of courses being sub-divided into unit standards, with the various unit standards being assigned to its own appropriate levels within the standard framework (p. 75).

Therefore the ASF was viewed as simply representing the traditional hierarchy of qualifications.

The competencies debate in Australian education and training

The competency-based approach has been a buzzword in the world of education and training in Australia since the early 1980s (Ducker 1993). It has been part of the discourse of the training agenda and remains a central pillar of industrial bargaining. However, it spilled out of the training sector in the 1990s and is being strongly advocated as an educational strategy in post-compulsory education-defined by the OECD as affecting young people aged 16 to 19 years (Collins 1993). Debates have been going on between the Ministers of Education and their counterpart Ministers of Vocational Education and Training in the early 1990s on ways of making employment-related key competencies a core aspect of the curriculum for all post-compulsory students in all States (ibid.).

In 1990 the Australian Education Council (AEC) established the Finn committee to consider and make recommendations about the participation of young people in post-compulsory education and training, whether in school, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), or higher education (Finn 1991). This is the time when the trade union movement from South Africa were in Australia to pursue the competency debates. The Finn Review Committee produced, in 1991, a report entitled *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*. The Report recommended a convergence of general and vocational education and identified six 'Areas of Competence' for employment, which were seen to be relevant and essential to all in the post-compulsory age group regardless of the education or training pathway they follow in the post-compulsory years. The Report also stressed the need of national co-ordination of relevant curriculum principles, assessment

practices and recorded outcomes across different education and training pathways (ibid.). The key areas of competence identified were as follows: language and communication, mathematics, scientific and technological understanding, cultural understanding, problem solving and personal and interpersonal characteristics.

To this effect the AEC resolved that the key competencies were:

competencies essential for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and work organisation. They focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations. Key competencies are generic in that they apply to work generally rather than being specific to work in particular occupations or industries. This characteristic means that the key competencies are not only essential for effective participation in work but also essential for further education and in adult life more generally (Ducker 1993: 69).

This was facilitated by the recommendation by the Finn Committee of the development of a standard framework with a profile for each key competency to describe clearly the nature of each competency at a range of levels (Borthwick 1993). Such a framework, it was proposed, would offer new opportunities for creating clearer linkages between education, training and the world of work. It was noted by Skilbeck et al (1994: 84-85) that:

The Finn Committee envisaged a commitment to at least two years of post-compulsory education and training for all young people. Thus, post-compulsory curricula and programmes must cater for ability at all levels and all kinds, diverse interests and different initial vocational and educational destinations. Curricula must be broad and balanced, with an appropriate mix of general and vocational education and theoretical and applied studies. Both school programmes and training programmes should be coherent and broad enough to incorporate the employment related competencies...Curriculum outcomes should be clear in terms of expected knowledge, skills and attitudes, and must be explicitly structured into standards frameworks compatible across both the school and the training sectors. Cross-crediting of learning between sectors was seen as a goal, to give young people flexibility in constructing appropriate individual learning programmes.

In late 1991, the idea of 'Areas of Competence' proposed by the Finn Committee was handed over to the Mayer Committee appointed specifically to explore the Finn proposal. The Mayer Committee proposed a set of seven Key Competencies' rather than 'Areas of Competence':

- Collecting, analysis and organising information

- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Working with others and in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology

These key competencies parallel the UK's 'core skill' and New Zealand's 'essential skills' and South Africa's critical cross field outcomes. The broad definition of competence adopted by the Mayer Committee recognised

that performance is underpinned not only by skill but also by knowledge and understanding, and that competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations (Mayer 1992: 4)

What is peculiar about the Mayer Report is its stress on general education as the foundation of knowledge, skill and understanding to be boosted by the Key Competencies. This values the intellectual development long associated with the academic curriculum.

The general argument of all these reports, which stress the need for a more highly skilled workforce whose high-level competencies generate greater cooperation leading to workplace democracy, reflect the basic assumptions underpinning Piore and Sabel's flexible specialisation thesis. But some critics argue that the potential was always exaggerated, due to institutional and educational problems associated with pathways (Kenway 1997). They argue that that it was never possible to integrate systems which were systematically designed to function separately and unequally (ibid.). The barriers to integration that were discussed in chapter 3 also apply here.

New Zealand

In common with other countries we have already discussed, New Zealand became involved in the reform of its post-compulsory education from the mid to late 1980s. According to Philips (1998, 2003), qualifications driven reforms were driven by neo-liberal principles such as reducing the role of the state and increasing choice, competition and accountability. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period of severe economic depression and rising youth unemployment, the debate over qualifications reform were focussed on vocational education and training issues. These included parity of status between vocational and academic education; emphasis of skills rather than knowledge; move towards competency based standards; the need to change structures associated with qualifications in order to enhance portability and progression within the delivery system; and increased participation through recognition of prior learning.

Historically, education and training have been highly differentiated in New Zealand. The system of qualifications have been characterised by an academic track (including school and university qualifications) and a vocational track. Students following the academic track would gain School Certificate at the end of upper secondary schooling, and has been become the central determinant in successful transition to higher education and the labour market. The less academic students would follow the lower status vocational course with the choice of attending polytechnics (leading to the awards of various certificates or diplomas).

There was a multitude of awarding bodies (industrial bodies, polytechnics, Trades Certification Board, and the Authority for Advanced Vocational Awards (AAVA). The rigid bureaucracies of these awarding bodies imposed different and confusing rules that destroyed flexibility, stifled change and inhibited the ability of the education and training system to keep pace with rapidly changing world (Phillips 1998).

There was gradual awareness in New Zealand in the period between the 1970s and 1980s that the tradition education and training system was rigid and only benefited a small proportion of the learners and hence the need for reform. The trend was characterised by Smithers (1997) as follows:

In 1984 a third of school-leavers left with no formal qualifications, while 18 per cent went out to university. Only 11 per cent of the age group graduated. Out of every 100 fifth formers, only nine went on to get technology related qualifications, four at degree level and five in technology-based trade certificates or technician certificates. Those without skills or qualifications were particularly likely to find themselves unemployed (p. 3).

The New Zealand government embarked on an intensive period of debates and reviews over qualifications, assessment and curriculum issues. The 1986 report, *Learning and Achievement* (review of curriculum, assessment and qualifications in the senior secondary school) signalled the move towards internal standards-based assessment (Philips, 1989, 2003; Smithers 1997). The report recommended achievement-based assessment which would not be based on the predetermined distribution of marks or a set of failure rate, that internally assessed certificates would replace the external examinations, and that a National Leaving Certificate should be made available to all students at the point of leaving school (ibid.).

During the same period, the Departments of Education and Labour produced a draft policy paper in 1986 which argued that occupational training was ineffective and not responsive to change. The policy goal was to create flexible vocational paths based on credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (Smithers 1997).

Various reports on many aspects of post-compulsory education and training were produced between 1987 and 1988. The government established in 1988 a Working Group on Post Compulsory Education and Training, commonly known as the Hawke Report (1988), to draw together the findings of previous reports (ibid.). The working group noted that the terms of references did not distinguish between education and training, but accepted that throughout post-compulsory education and training, there is a tension over the appropriate balance between but interrelated components of the whole process of education and training. While advocating:

..a system of national educational qualifications that will give assurance about educational standards and competencies...across the portfolio approach to qualifications which would help to reduce barriers to access and to movement between institutions, and allow appropriate recognition of a course irrespective of the institution in which it is taught...
it did recognise a distinction between the stimulation of the student's imagination...through subjects and the development of directly useful capabilities (p. 15).

This distinction between different types of learning is crucial in the discussions that will follow in this thesis. The Hawke Report embodied these differences in its proposal for a National Educational Qualifications Authority (NEQA). A NEQA would consist of a tripartite structure of the National Vocational Qualifications Board (NVQB) for vocational qualifications, a Secondary Education Qualifications Board (SEQB) for qualifications in secondary schools, and a National Academic Awards Body (NAAB) for degree level courses. A NEQA would be concerned with specifying national standards; evaluating courses proposed by providers and endorsing claims that they met those specified national standards (ibid.).

The Hawke Report also recommended that there should be a Ministry of Education and Training with responsibility extending across all education and training. Hawke's recommendations to establish a NEQA and a national system of qualifications were adopted and extended in the government's policy paper, *Learning for Life Two* in August 1989 (Smithers 1997; Phillips 2003). Many of Hawke's recommendations subsequently found their way into the Education Amendment Act 1990. The Education Amendment Act, 1990, created the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (or NZQA, the renamed NEQA). The NZQA became the overarching body within the education and training system and its key tasks was to create the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (New Zealand Government 1990, Par. 253). The New Zealand Qualifications framework has been discussed in the previous chapter.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an account of the major educational reforms which the four countries have implemented since the 1980s, especially those concerned with post compulsory education and training, which created the context from which qualification frameworks developed. The chapter has shown that policy developments in Australia and New Zealand have been greatly influenced by developments in the United Kingdom (especially NCVQ in England and SCOTVEC in Scotland) and that New Zealand also drew from the Australia's training reform agenda. We will see later in this thesis that the NQF in South Africa also drew from the experiences of the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

We have seen that all the four countries discussed have had a history of education and training systems which were characterised by academic and vocational divisions and low rates of participation in post-compulsory education and training. The low rate of participation was a result of barriers and rigidity within the education and training systems, which limited opportunities to expand learning. The development of qualification frameworks emerged as an outcome of the need to coordinate and control the expansion of post compulsory education and training. These reforms were initiated as a response to the economic problems various countries were facing since the 1980s. It is important to note that although the primary goal to reform post 16 education and training was an economic one in all the countries discussed, there was the notion of democracy and equity goals in these reforms agendas especially their emphasis on access and improving educational opportunities for all. The tension between these two goals will be a subject of discussion in this thesis and we will see later that there are more pronounced and much sharper in South African.

The chapter has also shown that competency-based approaches to education and training that emerged in the countries discussed reflect Piore and Sabel's view of the post-Fordist economy and that raises a lot of questions on the applicability of such approaches.

Chapter 5: The History of Apartheid Education and Training from 1948-1984

Introduction

This chapter analyses the education and training systems that were in operation under apartheid during the period 1948 and 1984. This period is important because 1948 signalled the coming to power of a Nationalist government, which was identified with the ideology of separate development or apartheid. The thesis draws on the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the HSRC/NTB (1984) report as sources of the later ideas. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first will give a brief background on South Africa and then highlight the conflicting approaches to education during this period in question. It will then delineate the distinctive features of the apartheid education system, which was characterised by poor quality, inequality of access, inequality in the provision of education available to members of different population groups and barriers between formal and non-formal education. The second section will highlight the main features of the fragmented training system, which was producing Africans in the world of work as manual and lowly skilled workers with no career paths. The third gives an overview of economic trends that were prevailing in South Africa in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the immediate response of the apartheid government to the challenges. Reference will be given to two Commissions, which were appointed by government in 1977: the Wiehahn Commission and the Riekert Commission. This will be followed by an analysis of the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the HSRC/NTB (1984) report entitled *An Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA*. This is before the trade union movement and other democratic forces commenced study tours to other countries looking for alternative post-apartheid education and training policies.

The history of education under apartheid has been analysed at length by various authors (Kallaway 1984, 2002; Nason & Samuel 1990; Nkomo 1990; UNESCO 1967). It is not the object of this section to repeat the complete history, but rather to

make selective references to Bantu Education and the education of Black South Africans, relevant to the present discussion. This brief history will enable the reader to understand the context in which the arguments of this thesis are located.

In this thesis, the term 'African' replaces the word 'Bantu' which was used by the South African Government to designate people of African stock, except in direct quotations where, if the word 'Bantu' was originally used, it is retained. The word 'White' is used for people of European stock, 'Asian' for people of Chinese or Indian descent, and 'Coloured' for those of mixed European and African or Asian background. The term 'Black' is used for people of African descent. Taking into consideration the nature of apartheid itself, it was difficult to avoid the use of such terms in this thesis. Therefore, their use should not imply their acceptance on my part.

Background

The year 1910 witnessed the Union of South Africa's four Provinces (Cape; Transvaal; Northern and Orange Free State), which had four separate colonial histories and different structural arrangements of the education system. The process of unification was presented with two main challenges. The first was how to consolidate the four separate colonial educational systems into one national one and, second, what approach to follow in terms of managing African affairs, since these had been administered outside the structures of White interests and institutions and developed unevenly in the different provinces.

The constitutional form chosen at unification recognised the four separate education systems at provincial level and one at Union level. The establishment of five different departmental systems (four provincial and one Union) obviously affected the development of any coherent national policy for primary and secondary education. It also resulted in the duplication of administrative functions with both provincial and Union departments competing for control over education.

The Union Constitution also determined that 'Native Affairs' would fall under the central government, although the education of Blacks had no developed links with the provincial education departments. The education for Blacks was supplied and administered through missionary societies with minimal State aid. Missionary education was characterised by uncoordinated development and inadequate resources for growth, which provided a tiny minority of Black South Africans with a bright future and the majority of the population was kept in increasing educational isolation.

The major ideological theme regarding Black education in the 1930s and 1940s was whether Black education should be a Black affairs issue and therefore administered by the Department of Native Affairs, or whether the integrity of education should be preserved and therefore Black education should be allocated to the Union Education Department. Cross (1986) has identified three schools of thought that dominated the study of education in South Africa since the beginning of the twentieth century: the nationalist/conservative, the liberal, and the radical/neo-Marxist.

The nationalist-conservative tradition.

The Nationalist/Conservative ideology was carried into effect by the coming to power of a Nationalist government in 1948. This policy was identified with the ideology of separate development or apartheid, which was described in the National Party (NP)'s Election Manifesto as follows:

in general terms our policy envisages segregating the most important ethnic groups and sub-groups in their own areas where every group will be enabled to develop into a self-sufficient unit. We endorse the general principle of territorial segregation of the Bantu and the Whites...the Bantu in the urban areas should be regarded as migratory citizens not entitled to political or social rights equal to those of the whites (UNESCO 1967: 14).

Under apartheid, people were legally classified into a racial group; the main ones being White, Black, Indian and Coloured and were geographically separated from each other on the basis of the legal classification. The provision of education and

training was differentiated along these racial lines. This was the dominant ideology in South Africa until the 1990s when a different political climate emerged, and the rest of the chapter will draw mainly from this school of thought.

The liberal tradition

Opposed to the nationalist-conservative ideas was the liberal educational philosophy, which was critical about the segregated Black education through the fragmentation of the education system and differentiation of curricula. The main objective of this thinking was the improvement of education provided for the Blacks so that it would equal that for the Whites (Cross 1986). This school still maintained the separate but equal strand in its thinking. It advocated the removal of certain apartheid policies and stressed that Bantu education would lead to a serious shortage of skills.

At the heart of this school of thought was the so-called 'economic liberalism', which was concerned with the liberalisation of the education system, the survival of the free enterprise system, and questions of manpower supply (Kallaway 1984, Cross 1986). It also stressed the need for education to recruit the ablest from all races for industry, bolstering the argument for equality of opportunity and labour efficiency. Critiques of this school's thinking of manpower planning argued that it produces technicist solutions, rather than the political and social solutions that are required (Kallaway 1984). The bottom line here is that reforming apartheid education would lead to economic growth. The argument is that these reforms would lead to equality of opportunity but not equal education, since education provided on a separate basis could never be equal. I will come back to these reformist policies later in this chapter when examining the Report of the de Lange Committee.

The Radical/Neo-Marxist School

This third philosophical stream emerged in the 1970s due to heightened conflict in education, evidenced by the rise of Black consciousness, student uprisings of 1976

and the school boycotts of 1980 (Cross 1986: 193). This school put forward the argument that in view of new developments of the time, the priorities that were popular in the 1960s and 1970s were now irrelevant. This approach postulates that education as offered by the state is subject to the needs of the economy and the process of labour production and that the State uses the school as an instrument to produce and reproduce labour (Engelbrecht 1992). This approach to education known as the radical view is critical of the liberal philosophy of education and maintains that the latter will lead to the emergence of a liberal capitalist democracy.

It is important to state at this point that it would be rather difficult to link Black views on education to any one of these approaches outlined above. In the early 1980s, Blacks rejected the conservative doctrine and endorsed some form of liberal approach to education and a more radical black approach emerged in the mid 1980s (Kallaway 1984). Some of the Black views will be addressed later in this chapter.

Provision of education under the nationalist/conservative tradition

Several Acts were passed to bring education closer to the policy of separate development, including but not limited to, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (RSA 1953), which brought all black schooling under government control, effectively ending mission run schools; the promotion of Black Self-Government Act of 1958 (RSA 1958), which set up territorial governments in the 'homelands', designated lands for Black people where they could have a vote; and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 (RSA 1959), which created separate universities for Blacks, Coloureds and Indians (Nasson and Samuel 1990).

Black education was allocated in the Department of Native Affairs, which was to be centrally controlled and financed under the Minister of Native Affairs and was directed to black needs. Syllabuses were to be adjusted to suit the requirements and lifestyles of Blacks (Christie & Collins 1984). This fragmented system of provision was widely criticised for racial discrimination and underdevelopment in the education of Black South Africans.

The policy of separate development was also extended to the education of Coloureds and Indians. In 1962, the government transferred the education of Coloureds from the respective provincial departments to the Department of Internal Affairs, housing a department dealing with 'Coloured Affairs'. This arrangement was finalised by the passing of the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963 (RSA 1963), which led to the establishment of a separate Department of Coloured Education. The corresponding re-arrangement of Indian education was effected by the Indians Education Act of 1965 (RSA 1965).

As we have seen, the attempt by the National Party government since the passage of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was to organise education within the parameters of political ideology and separate development. White education was also co-ordinated and organised separately, and the National Education Policy Act of 1967 gave overall powers to the Minister to direct all White education through consultation between government and provincial departments. The National Education Advisory Council and Committee of Heads of Education was set up, which effectively became the most powerful bodies in White education.

It was an extension of the policy of separate development that the government set up ten homeland areas of Black rural settlement. The 1958 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (RSA 1958) provided for the establishment of separate black governments, with the promise of some form of self-government status. The implication of this was that each of the Black states established would set up its own education department, responsible for roughly two thirds of all Black pupils enrolled in South African schools as a whole. The remainder of Black pupils were educated in schools falling outside the designated homelands, under the control of yet another authority, the Department of Education and Training (formerly the Department of Bantu Education).

One point requires emphasis before engaging in analysis of the actual disparities in the provision of education. It is the existence of the Department of 'Education and

Training' during this early period. This was mainly focused on developing skills that would fit Blacks into kinds of low and semi-skilled jobs in particular geographical locations. Higher primary and secondary schools for Blacks provided both academic and vocational courses (one of them being 'Gardening and Agriculture'). Although it was criticised for being soft on technical skills meant for the development of manual labour attributes rather than the appropriate repertoire of skills to compete with Whites as trained artisans (Christie and Collins 1984; Paterson 2003), the concept of linking education and training was there since the late 1950s. We will see later that the use of the term 'education and training' in current debates often refers to high skills for globalisation rather than basic skills for sustainable livelihoods.

One of the features that characterised the apartheid education was its multiplicity of departments. At the time of the De Lange Report (HSRC 1981), the provision of education in apartheid South Africa was the responsibility of 19 racially and ethnically divided education departments in all, 11 in African education (with nine examining bodies administering about 90 examinations each year) (Kraak 1992; Hofmeyr and Backland 1992). At the helm of the system of education in South Africa was the Ministry of National Education which was established in 1984. Alongside the Ministry of National Education were four other ministries responsible for the education of designated 'population groups'. General education policy was an outcome of the negotiation of the Ministry of National Education and the other four ministries. Each of the four ministries were racially exclusive and were accorded control over the implementation of policy, teacher training, educational programmes and methods.

The control of education in South Africa was further divided into 'own affairs' and 'general affairs'. General education affairs was the responsibility of a white cabinet minister and African education was designated a general affair. Own affairs education referred to the education of Coloured, Whites and Indians and was responsibility of racially segregated Coloured, White and Indian education departments.

The control of education in South Africa was fragmented into 19 operating departments under 14 different cabinets implementing their own regulations in terms of at least 12 Education Acts (Hofmeyer and Buckland 1992).

Such a multiplicity of departments had produced superstructural administrative chaos (Mahomed 1996). No single ministry had responsibility of all education and there was considerable lack of co-ordination within the education system. Such a fragmented system was characterised by lack of uniform norms and standards for achieving comparability in the quality of educational provision and inequalities between the educational opportunities by the different systems of provision.

The multiplicity of departments had resulted also in extensive bureaucracies in the provision of education, which resulted in poor communication, inflexibility, inefficient and wastage of funds (Hofmeyer and Buckland 1992).

Inequality of provision in apartheid education

The theme running through the history of apartheid education in South Africa was the differential pattern of educational provision for different race groups. While whites received a very high level of education, black education was characterised by insufficient and poorly qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, high drop out rates, limited allocation of resources such as furniture, books and other equipment (Christie & Collins 1984; Pillay 1990; Unterhalter et.al 1991). These gross inequalities of provision are illustrated in the Table below adapted from Christie (1992: 39)

Table Comparative Statistics, 1987

	White	Indian	Coloured	African
Population size (1000s)	4911	913	3069	33580
Population %	11.6%	2.1%	7.2%	79.1%
Per capita expenditure	R2508	R1904	R1021	R476
Per capita ratio	5.3	4.0	2.1	1
Pupil-teacher ratio	16:1	21:1	25:1	41:1
Standard 10 pass rate	95%	93%	69%	56%
Matriculation exemption	43%	37%	18%	17%

The underdevelopment of Black education is clearly reflected in the school enrolment patterns, especially in inadequate per capita state expenditure, in pupil-teacher ratio and the relatively small number of Black students gaining a matriculation exemption (this provides access to university education and ultimately a professional occupation). As shown in the table above, in 1987 for example, only 17 per cent of African pupils gained a university entrance pass.

It is evident from the above statistics that the quality of schooling for Blacks could not equal that provided for Whites. While Whites received a very high level of education, Black education remained marginalised.

Another central feature of apartheid education was the overwhelming of academic dominance and university orientation of the curriculum for the rest of racial groups apart from that provided for Bantu education. This character has its roots in the early establishment of the Cape Education Department in 1839, drawing from its colonial

links with Britain (Kallaway 1984, 2002). The Cape system expanded itself to become the model for educational development in South Africa, from which the three other regions drew ideas (*ibid.*).

With the establishment of higher education at the Cape, preparation for the university matriculation examination became the dominant influence on the curriculum for all education. This became the norm for White education and created a dualism in the curriculum. Mainstream academic education was the responsibility of the provincial education departments, while technical and vocational education was overseen by central government. Non-academic education was seen as inferior and was not seen to lead to higher education. Vocational education had a generally low status and had been associated with the impoverished, the socially handicapped and the disadvantaged (Paterson 2003). As a result of looking down upon vocational education, excessive number of Whites came to enter the labour force 'without adequate vocational qualification, skills or appropriate value systems' (Davies 1984: 361) or without having a clear vocational goal in sight, with obvious wider economic repercussions.

The educational disadvantages which had accrued historically to Black South Africans and the introduction of Bantu Education with its emphasis on vocational education were meant to provide Blacks with schooling sufficient only for employment at the unskilled and semi-skilled levels required by manufacturing industry and agricultural sector. It was noted by Christie and Collins (1984) and Chisholm (1992) that the manufacturing sector was said to require semi-skilled workers in the 1950s and 1960s while the agriculture and mining sector relied on Black migrants from outside the Republic of South Africa and manual workers. Bantu education was tailored towards meeting the needs of the agriculture and mining sectors.

With the technological development of capitalist economies in the 1970s and 1980s, the kinds of divisions of labour began to change correspondingly (Piore & Sabel 1984; Mathews 1988; Murray 1987; Boyer 1990; Chisholm 1992) and as a result,

low levels of skilled Black workers became an obstacle to economic development. The technological readjustment and the reorganisation of work and the labour market opened up the demand for new levels of skill. Many commentators, such as Chisholm (1992), saw the restructuring of education and training as capable of redressing acute shortages in skilled manpower as well as addressing the problems of unemployment. These debates gave vocational education a new meaning and new importance.

The apartheid training system

It is well documented that South Africa's racially based policies of separate development led to the exclusion of the majority of Black workers from opportunities for technical education and training (Badroodien 2003; Bird 2003; Chisholm 1992; Kraak 1992, 2002; Mohammed 1996; McGrath 1996; 2000). This was reflected in Hendrik Verwoerd's notorious statement as a Minister of Native Affairs: 'Africans were to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water' (quoted in Bird 2003: 3). The history of the racially segregated nature of technical college education dates back to the provisions of the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 (RSA 1922), which set down high educational requirements to enter apprenticeships (Lewis 1984; Chisholm 1992). Because of the low level of education Blacks received, these requirements effectively precluded and prevented most Black youths from being able to enter apprenticeships. Access to technical colleges was dependent on having apprenticeship. The training legislation was differentiated along racial lines. The Apprenticeship Act of 1944 and the Training of Artisans Act of 1951 were made more accessible to Whites although Coloureds and Indians were not explicitly excluded (Bird 2003). The Black Building Workers Act of 1951, passed after the World War, was meant to give Africans the opportunity to qualify as skilled building workers. After the war, a massive building programme of Black housing was undertaken, but Black builders could only work in their own communities and not in White urban areas (ibid.).

Chisholm (1992) shows that when the Nationalist government came to power in 1948, technical college education was re-organised in two ways. Technical colleges for other races including Coloured and Indians were located in urban areas near industries and those for Blacks were located in remote areas. In technical colleges for Whites, technical education encompassed both theoretical and practical training in workshops and on the job. In those for Blacks, the focus was trade instruction sufficient only for employment at the unskilled and semi-skilled end of the informal labour market.

There were about 128 technical colleges administered by 10 education departments, and a large number of training programmes and skills training centres co-ordinated through the Department of Manpower (Kraak 1992). The practical component of trade training was administered by the department of Manpower, while the theoretical component fell under the National Department of Education. The institutional bureaucracy extended further. The Department of Manpower was supposedly in charge of coordinating all matters relating to training of workers in the private sector. However, there were separate manpower departments in each of the independent homelands, and the administration of training for local authorities, the public sector and some parastatals was handled by these structures independently of the Department of Manpower (*ibid.*). Undoubtedly, these multiplicities of training departments created massive problems of bureaucracy and it is not surprising that certification processes in South Africa were chaotic and uncoordinated.

The differentiated treatment of Black education and training by the apartheid policies of separate development added to the general neglect, so that the structural position into which Blacks were drawn economically was one of a vast resource of unskilled labour, a pattern reinforced by the rural location of Blacks in under-developed homeland areas. The historical legacy therefore left the largest part of the population with large backlogs not only in the extent of educational provision, but also in the quality of education received, through inequalities in the levels of funding, facilities and the supply of trained teachers.

Wide exclusion was the main cause of discontent, and the struggles of Black workers, students and their communities were against apartheid in general. In 1973 these struggles and massive spontaneous strikes were precipitated by the fall of real wages in the face of falling gold price, economic stagnation and inflation. These strikes saw the emergence of powerful industrial trade unionism amongst Black workers, especially the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), which was concerned about poor jobs for Black workers and few career opportunities (Allais 2003; Bird 2003; Pityana 1996).

The school boycotts, unrest and the upheaval associated with the massacre of many school children demonstrating in Soweto on 16 June 1976 stand out as by far the most serious crisis in the educational history of South Africa. Tens of thousands of Black school students took to the streets in the Black township of Soweto near Johannesburg to protest against Bantu Education-in what are now referred to as the Soweto Uprisings. Police responded with teargas and live bullets, what is commemorated today by a South African national holiday, Youth Day, which honours all the young people who lost their lives in the struggle against apartheid.

These social disturbances and the underlying economic crisis rendered the apartheid state weak and insecure. Action was needed and as a result, a number of Commissions of Inquiry were set up to find a solution to these problems. The underlining dilemma for the government, however, remained the initiation of evolutionary change without forfeiting entrenched White power.

In summary, the apartheid training policy was shaped by:

- A few training opportunities for black workers and an emphasis on training and skilling for whites, given the racially-defined craft model of apprenticeship.
- The lack of recognition of informally-acquired skills: the argument is that a large number of black workers classified as unskilled had acquired high level skills and knowledge through the years of on-the-job experience. There was no recognition or pay for these skills acquired.

- The lack of co-ordination between education and training structures, and no meaningful coherent framework to link training with questions of economic restructuring and education.
- The lack of clear national standards: the majority of workers who participated in company training programmes at lower levels were not able to receive recognition for their knowledge outside the company. Where companies provided certificates, these were not nationally recognised. This was due to the fact that courses were not designed in accordance with national standards
- A multitude of certification councils: there were separate certification councils, the SA Certification Council for formal school qualifications and the Certification Council for technical education and no certification council in the informal sector. As a result, there has been no mechanism to accredit education and training received across industrial sectors and between education and training institutions (Kraak 1992).

The main consequence of such a fragmented system was that there was no transferability of vocational skills on the external labour market, due to the lack of a certification council in the non-formal sector. The situation was made worse by the absence of a recognised qualification structure for the non-formal vocational training sector (Mohammed 1996).

Before examining some of the responses from government, the section that follows will briefly discuss the underlying economic and manpower trends of the period 1976-1980.

Economic and manpower factors

The major trends of the period that commenced late in 1974 to 1979 were deepening economic recessions, fall in the price of gold in 1975, high rate of inflation,

increasing Black unemployment and yet acute shortages in skilled manpower. This recession was initially linked to a general world recession¹², but was greatly worsened by the political unrest in the Black townships, which led finally to the shooting tragedy of Soweto school children in 1976 (Nattrass 1981; Davies 1984). It was also fuelled by rising unemployment among Blacks, by the war in Angola, by international pressure on South Africa herself, which affected the flow of foreign capital as well as by the generally poor economic climate present in the Western world as a whole (Nattrass 1981).

Many commentators (Bird 2003; Chisholm 1992; Davies 1984) see the skilled labour crisis as a result of restrictions on the training of Blacks due to the apartheid education and training policies. Even though these policies were suitable for the needs of the capitalist system of production of the time, 'they became less functional under conditions of increased capital intensification' (Davies 1984: 347). These arguments can be linked to the new system of production, which has been described as post-Fordism in chapter two.

In South Africa, the conditions of 'increased capital intensification' speeded up moves by capital to tackle the skilled labour crisis, which was created by defining skill as White, and eased the restrictions on the education of highly trained Black manpower. This skill shortage argument has been explored to explain the positive relationship between education and economic growth in South Africa (Davies 1984). Changes in the production process were compelling capital to consider reforms in the education and training systems. Some moves by capital to improve the conditions of Blacks can be located in November 1976 when two leading industrialists, Harry Oppenheimer of Anglo American Corporation and Anton Rupert of the Rembrandt Group, launched the Urban Foundation. Its declared aim was to

¹² The world economic crisis corresponds to America's loss in the Vietnam War; the student-worker protests in North America and Western Europe; the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system; the economic dominance of Japan; the 1973 OPEC-led fuel price hike; high unemployment and inflation and low growth rates in the Western economies (Bowles et al 1984; Maller & Dwolatsky 1992; King & McGrath 2002).

improve the quality of life of the urban citizen through projects relating to employment, education, housing and health, which were to be determined by the requirements of the black communities themselves...as well as encouraging the adoption of free enterprise values within the black urban communities. Fundamental to the playing of this ideological role has been the necessity to break with the traditional ideology of Bantu Education and to replace it with the doctrine of equality of educational opportunity as a means of fostering the belief that positions under a free enterprise system are determined by the educational achievements of individuals and not by imputed racial characteristics (Davies 1984: 353-4)

This marked the beginning of private sector involvement in Black community development and educational reform (Kallaway 1984: 28-32).

To signal the departure from the main historical trend of increasing State involvement in the economy, two Commissions were appointed by government in 1977- the Wiehahn Commission and the Riekert Commission- 'in order to satisfy demands from monopoly capital for an enlarged, stable source of African semi-skilled and skilled labour' (Marais 1998: 42).

The two Commissions emphasised that the time has come for the State to have less of a role in the economy, which should be devolved to the private sector and that there should be the establishment of a 'free market' in South Africa. Natrass (1981) commented that

the findings of these Commissions, together with the reactions to them, suggest that a major ideological shift with respect to state economic policy may be taking place (p. 27).

The relevance of this literature to this research is that these emerging economic policies were based on the assumption that by devolving economic power to the private sector, employers will be able to identify their training needs and have a say on the type of vocational qualifications relevant to the labour market. This would allow them to define qualifications in terms of occupational standards (Young 2005).

We have seen in chapter three that the origins of the idea of a national qualifications framework both in the UK and New Zealand have been located in the context of the emerging neo-liberal economic policies of the 1980s and early 1990s, which

emphasised the role of the private sector in economic growth (ibid.). This has also shown that similar trends have been happening within South African capitalism at the same time and undoubtedly these economic trends have influenced education and training reform in South Africa.

In addition to these proposals, the Commissions also criticised the apartheid training system's multiplicity of departments and bodies that lacked effective co-ordination. The Commissions noted that the apprenticeship system was outdated both pedagogically and technologically and that there was lack of mobility between formal education and non-formal training sectors (RSA 1979; Wiehahn 1982).

Both Commissions made recommendations that introduced significant changes to the labour and training legislation, which resulted in the passage of the Manpower Training Act of 1981. The Act replaced a large number of laws, which had created racially segregated institutions for the training of employees. It was the first consolidated law to regulate and promote training in all sectors of the economy under a single, non-racially defined act. For the first time Africans could be indentured as apprentices. However, few Blacks got artisan and technician status while White workers were being the recipients of company and state training programmes. In 1982, 92.9% of artisans and 87.6% of technicians employed in the industrial sector in South Africa were white while 3.1% of artisans and 6.9% of technicians were Blacks (Kraak and von Holdt 1990: 17).

We can see that South African response to economic crisis of the period between 1976-1980 came first in training rather than education. Attention shifted to education with the commission of the de Lange Report at the beginning of the 1980s as the state continued to realise that economic growth was being subverted by chronic skill shortages, which necessitated educational reform. The analysis of the de Lange Report is what follows.

The de Lange Commission

We have seen from the previous sections factors which may have prompted the setting up of the de Lange Commission in June 1980. These factors included but were not limited to the problems in Black and Coloured education relating to the demands for equality in educational provision; problems of organisation and bureaucratic inefficiency of the education and training system, the demand for trained manpower and the overall need for finding new policy directions for social, economic and political development in South Africa. Apartheid policies were unsustainable both locally and internationally and therefore there was need for change.

In June 1980, the South African cabinet requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), a government agency, to make an investigation into the existing provision of education and training. A 26-member Main Committee of the HSRC was appointed and reported to the Minister of National Education in July 1981 (HSRC 1981: 3-4). Prof. Pieter de Lange, the then Rector of the Rand Afrikaans University, was appointed chairman of this high-level investigation committee. The composition of the Main Committee may be analysed from a variety of perspectives, such as race, sex, language group, institutional affiliation, area of speciality, and access to power. On the basis of race and language, the ratio of participation was as follows: Whites 19 (Afrikaans-speaking 14; English-speaking 5): Blacks 3: Coloureds 2: Indian 2. This composition was a reflection of White domination over other racial groups and an indication of the historic and institutional factors in which the inequalities lay. From the historical advantage of a differentiated education system meant to serve the Whites, it is not surprising that the majority of educational expertise and leadership were found in predominantly White institutions. The imbalance between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking may be explained from the political ascendancy of the Afrikaner, which had resulted in the monopoly of State departments.

It is also important to note the representation from the following point of view: there were nine from the university sector, thirteen from government departments, two from recognised teacher organisations, one from the private sector (Anglo-American) and one teacher (the only woman in the committee) (Collins and Gillespie 1984). It is also profitable to note in passing that one expert represented the Department of Manpower. From the composition of the committee, one can observe that there was no representation from political affiliations, community leaders and the student body. However, it can be said that the composition of the Main Committee did, in fact, mark a historical landmark for South Africa in its inclusion of significant non-White membership in a joint enterprise of such national importance.

The de Lange report was extensively analysed by various academics and commentators such as Collins and Gillespie (1984), Buckland (1984), Nasson (1990), Engelbrecht (1992) and McGrath (1996). The intention is not to repeat such analysis, but rather to identify the usage of such terminology as mobility, progression, access, single system, modular educational structure, credit transfer, linkages between formal and non-formal education, parity of status between academic and vocational, and national certification body. The relevance of this analysis is that such terms were used in the construction of the NQF in South Africa from the early 1990s. The purpose is to establish some continuity between what has been proposed in the de Lange report and what followed in future education and training reforms.

Chapter one of the report was mainly concerned with the rationale and the scope of the research task. Chapters two dealt with the set of eleven principles for the provision of education in the RSA that were identified as 'guidelines that should form the basis of the system of providing education' (HSRC 1981: 11). Chapter three outlined some shortcomings of the then education system, which have been delineated in the previous sections. Chapter four was devoted to the possible solutions to these problems, namely 'recommendations for a future system for the provision of education for the RSA' (p. 91). Chapter five operationalised the recommendations contained in chapter four in the form of 'proposed guidelines' (p.

212) and 'recommendations on priorities' (p. 214). The analysis here is mainly concerned with recommendations made in chapter four.

Recommendations for a new educational structure

The recommendations for a new educational structure was given importance in the report of the Main Committee by the amount of space devoted to them (p 98-129). The Main Committee defined the educational structure as follows:

The educational structure is the framework within which different types of teaching and leaning situations are arranged, including also their mutual relationships. The structure makes provision for various educational possibilities as well as for the possibility of both vertical and horizontal flow of pupils through the system (p. 95).

The use of the terms vertical and horizontal flow indicate the concern of mobility of learners within the delivery system. The report had noted that the then education system had limited horizontal flow and that formal education¹³ had limited ties with non-formal education; in other words learners could not 'move readily from one type of education to another' (p. 96). According to the definition of nonformal education given by the Main Committee, it can be argued that nonformal education is also the world of training.

With respect to the interaction between formal and non-formal education, de Lange argued that learners in non-formal education had few possibilities of continuing their study and training within the formal provision of education (p. 104). De Lange argued that it is less difficult to move from formal to non-formal than the 'inlets' (entry points) into formal education via non-formal education (p. 126).

¹³ The report distinguished between formal and nonformal as follows: formal education was defined as planned education that takes place in a school, college or university, where as nonformal education is education that takes place in a planned but highly adaptable way in institutions or organisations outside the spheres of formal education. This refers to the emphasis on the principle and the possibility of continuing study and training both within the formal and the nonformal provision of education respectively, and through the interaction between them (p.91, 104).

Concerned about this problem, de Lange recommended an investigation into the establishment of a national certification body that would be responsible for standards of evaluation certification in both formal and nonformal education (ibid.). Due to the lack of this common certification council, there have been no mechanisms to accredit education received between formal and non-formal education. An appropriate certification system will enable learners to progress optimally in their school and/or working careers.

Other aspects of the new educational structure proposed included the recommended three phases in the educational structure (prebasic, basic, and postbasic education) (p. 99-102). It can be argued that the educational structure¹⁴ that was in use during the time of de Lange reflected some aspects of the proposed three phases. However, the distinction is that in the new proposed structures, a new concept of 'levels' (p. 98) is used instead of grade, standard and form.

The concept of level was used

in order to make finer distinctions in respect of progression vertically through the system..this will make standardisation necessary in order to co-ordinate certification and 'outlet' points (p. 104).

The report also proposed a flexible modular educational structure¹⁵ with integration of formal and non-formal education. This will allow for horizontal movement between these two forms of education; mutual recognition of certification; right of admission to courses, rather than to institutions; and bridging courses¹⁶ between formal and non-formal education, allowing for vertical mobility. This provides for

¹⁴ The then existing structure consisted of a non-compulsory pre-primary phase which may be compared with the prebasic phase. The primary phase (three years junior primary and three years senior primary) may be compared with the proposed basic. The secondary (three years junior secondary and three years senior secondary) and postsecondary phases (tertiary) may be compared with the proposed postbasic phase.

¹⁵ It is a framework within which various levels and grades of courses can be arranged to form rounded off units or phases.

¹⁶ This is a course designed to round off a particular level and grade, which is also a point of withdrawal from formal education, and by this means to create a link with viable occupational possibilities and/or training in non-formal education.

the differences in ability, interests, choices and age and stage of development of learners.

The purpose of the modular educational structure was to

ensure maximum flow and to prevent blocking of the system through failure during the phase of basic education; to offer the gifted child from the beginning the opportunity of mastering the basics through a process of enrichment, and to offer the less gifted child the advantage of appropriate support after Level 1 (p. 109).

It is important to note in passing that when Scotland implemented its 16-plus Action Plan in 1984 (modular courses replaced all non-advanced courses in further education and all non-academic courses for 16-18s in schools), the proposals of a modular structure were already in de Lange in 1981. This comparison is important because the 16-plus Action Plan is considered as the first building block of the Scottish Credit and qualifications Framework.

The report also recommended the 'recognition of modules (credits) in courses' (p. 123) in order to facilitate horizontal flow. The report argued that

if modules in courses are not mutually recognised then horizontal flow between institutions on one hand and between courses within a particular institution on the other, remains limited (p124).

We will see in the discussions later that the implementation of qualification frameworks is based on shared communities of practice.

In summary the proposed structure would have the following features:

- it would be open with interaction between non-formal education and the world of work;
- it would have outlet points from the formal system at different levels, for example after six years, after nine years, and into higher education;
- formal education outlet points would be preceded by rounding off modules;

- inlet points from work and non-formal education into formal education would also require a bridging module;
- compulsory education should continue through part-time vocationally-oriented non-formal courses after the basic stage;
- outlet points from formal education should be certificated, and inlet points should be to courses rather than institutions, based on certification relevant to further study in the formal system.

In view of my theme, the most important aspect of the report was the emphasis on the integration of formal and non-formal education, allowing for the implementation of a sound argument that education should be interspersed with work throughout life (Stoikov 1975). Stoikov used the term recurrent education and training to refer to education derived from this principle, which was defined as

a global system containing a variety of programmes which distribute education and training of different levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), by formal and non-formal means, over the life span of the individual in a recurring way, that is, alternated with work or other activities (p. 5).

The key issue here is the timing of these activities over the individual's whole lifetime, avoiding the concept of terminal education. The report sees education as a continuing process and this is linked to the concept of lifelong learning, which forms the basis of current debates on education and training. One of the objectives of the proposed new education system summed it up:

To create an integrated, flexible relationship between formal and nonformal education, between school and the world of work, in the context of lifelong continuing education (HSRC 1981: 194).

The report also emphasised the need for a balance between academic and vocational education in the process of schooling. It recommended that

there should be a move towards a balance between general formative preparatory academic education and the general formative preparatory career education, which relates to the manpower needs of the country; by means of appropriate curriculum design the mathematics, natural science and vocational development of the learner should be made possible, from as early an age as possible, as a normal part of the process of schooling (p. 139).

The recommendation made here is the realisation of the importance of vocational education to the economy and the need for it to be part of the curriculum for every learner. It is important to note that the proposed system was open and flexible for learners to still make their choices and realise their potential. What is important is to have a pool of both academic and vocational subjects in the curriculum from which learners to choose from.

One of the issues for which the de Lange report was criticised, was its recommendation of curricular differentiation¹⁷ within formal as well as non-formal education for the senior intermediate level (senior secondary). The report confines itself to the more important guidelines, which may be summarised as follows:

Differentiation should be determined by the curriculum and should be subject to continuing renewal;
it should be planned in conjunction with the current and expected manpower needs of the country;
it should be flexible to adapt quickly to changing demands. (p. 119-121).

The idea of streaming pupils at all levels to ensure full utilisation of existing resources is fully supported as the report argues for 'differentiation according to grade of difficulty', and 'the canalisation of individuals into appropriate directions that suit their individual abilities and the needs of the country' (p. 126, 128).

The report made a recommendation of an urgent investigation into the range of acceptable channelling mechanisms, and into effective combination and placing of such mechanisms (p. 129). To that effect, Collins and Gillespie (1984) noted that after six years of compulsory education, pupils would be channelled into either (1) an academic school, (2) a commercial or technical school, or (3) the non-formal system (e.g., in-service training, apprenticeship, etc). This meant that children would be able to leave formal school system with a Standard IV certificate after six years

¹⁷ Differentiation here is used in reference to the number of study fields or establishment of more subjects or levels of instruction that should take place according to ability, aptitude, and manpower needs of the country. The proposed modular structure is meant to promote flow and differentiation and learners will be differentiated by the modules they take.

of compulsory basic education. They would take the non-formal training route to complete the remaining three years. In proposing this non-academic route, the de Lange Committee had specifically in mind the Black, Coloured, and Indian communities (HSRC 1981: 138).

Many commentators, such as Nasson (1990), argued that such streaming would reproduce and enlarge 'the divisions, hierarchies, and inequalities of the occupational order' (p. 69).

We will see later that differentiation was a possible option rather than a one-size fits-all model for a democratic South Africa since the goal was to redress, hence the need to take on board different learners in different circumstances. Please note that the differentiation being promoted here is the one, which occurs on the grounds of ability, interest and occupational orientation and not that based on race or distribution of educational resources.

Last, but not least, the recommendations made by the de Lange Committee were going to be meaningless in a fragmented education system we have seen before. However, in section 4.17 of chapter 4 of the de Lange Report, a suggestion was made that a single ministry (One Minister and department) be created:

It is recommended that a single ministry of education be created to effectively meet the needs for a national education policy aimed at equal opportunity and equal quality and standards and relevance to the changing educational needs of the RSA (HSRC 1981: 195).

The implementation of this recommendation would mean removing the control of White education from the four provinces and would signify the end of the four separate education departments for Whites, Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians.

The NTB's reform agenda

We have seen from the previous section that the passage of the Manpower Training Act of 1981 paved the way for all South Africans to embark upon apprenticeship. This followed the introduction of the National Training Board (NTB) with a mandate to advise the Minister of Manpower on training issues (replacing the Apprenticeship Board established under the Apprenticeship Act of 1944). The NTB drew its membership from employers, government, trade unions and training providers. But until 1991 representatives from the democratic movement were excluded from the NTB.

The purpose of this section is to give reference to a report published by the HSRC/NTB in 1984 entitled *An Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA* (HSRC/NTB 1984). The aim is to show some continuity with de Lange and to highlight the introduction of the competency-based modular training system for the apprenticeship system. This section will also highlight some international influences on these reform proposals, such as the British training system and the competency movement in Australia. This is interesting in view of later borrowings.

The report repeated the criticisms of the then training system and made some recommendations, which introduced significant changes to the artisan training system in South Africa. The preface of the report noted skills shortages as a major challenge facing South Africa:

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, one of the most pressing needs in the RSA, plagued by many large economic, monetary and political problems, is a reasonable supply of trained manpower for all population groups in order to improve productivity (NTB/HSRC 1984: xi).

The report drawing from de Lange (ibid. 165) attributed the skills shortage to the then education system (ibid. 178). The report reiterated that because of education's emphasis on academic orientated general formative education, persons enter the vocational world without a proper system of values or sufficient skills. It is noted the

tendency to look down on manual work and practical skills, which has 'detrimental results on the development of technical manpower' (p. 178).

The report also criticised the existing approaches to apprenticeship training for its inability to meet current technological skill requirements. Some of the shortcomings noted were:

- In many cases, inappropriate approaches to apprentice training were followed, leading to the production of artisans of a low standard.
- The lower quality of artisans was often associated with achieving artisan status by effluxion of time in the period since the advent of the trade testing system
- The present system, which is almost entirely time based, does not take into account the difference of tempo in the learning of apprentices as well as differences in the content of the courses. The apprenticeship period (effluxion of time) varies between three and five years, depending on the trade and industry, whereas the shortest possible period of practical training before a voluntary trade test can be tempted is approximately 80 to 90 weeks (NTB/HSRC 1984: 108).

The concern here was that apprentices would acquire artisan status after three or five years regardless of passing the trade test. Another concern raised on the report was that many employers would focus their apprentices on specific skills required for a particular job, rather than adopting a more broad-based approach to skills training that include the more cognitive (problem-solving, innovation and higher productivity) that the new technologies now required (ibid.).

The report argued that as a result of technological development and accelerated production processes, the traditionally time-based approach to apprenticeship training is no longer considered sufficient and was being increasingly phased out internationally. The report also took note of some international trends on apprenticeship training. The following examples are of interest in this section:

- 1) The report noted a developing tendency in Europe towards the growing convergence between apprenticeship training and full-time institutional career education. This is in view of the general consensus on the balance between general/theoretical training and practical training/experience.

- 2) Another development also noted was the English modular approach¹⁸, which was developed by the Engineering Industrial Training Board. After obtaining artisan status, the apprentice can receive training in further modules up the ladder or in related directions so as to enhance mobility. Also popular is practical training off the job in special training centres. An example from West German and pre-artisan training of Australia was cited.
- 3) Another important development also noted was the integration of apprenticeship into formal institutional education in order to form a link between compulsory education and other forms of secondary and career education. A completed apprenticeship could be considered as equivalent to secondary education. Australia and northern Europe were cited as examples following this approach (ibid.45-52).

The report made the following recommendations of training for attaining artisan status:

The existing system of artisan training was to be converted to one 'using modular performance based institutional training coupled with controlled on-the-job training experience' (ibid. 113). This implied performance evaluation in each of the training modules (ibid. 116). An artisan status would be certified after successful completion of the training programme and passing a final performance evaluation.

The report also proposed the phasing out of apprenticeship training by effluxion of time (ibid. 118); the teaching of trade theory alongside practical training in a single institution while the theoretical training should be interspersed with the practical training to achieve the best co-ordinated results (ibid. 118); and practical training off

¹⁸ The British modular system involves one-year full time outside the work situation receiving a general broad training. Two packages or training modules are completed in the following two years before artisan status is obtained. On completion of the modular training, the apprentice is expected to spend six months in the work situation, in order to apply the skills in a practical situation.

the job and practical experience on the job must be well structured and controlled (ibid. 120-121).

The report also recommended the devolution of control over apprenticeship training from the Department of Manpower to Industry Artisan Training Boards (IATB) (ibid. 113). This development would ease unnecessary inefficient bureaucracy associated with state intervention in training.

As we have seen, the report advocated modular performance based institutional training system because of its flexibility, allowing progression paths for all levels of workers (ibid. 117). This was an important development since apprenticeships only catered for artisans. We will see later these issues being picked up by trade unions from the early 1990s

Conclusions

This chapter has shown the wide-ranging inequalities in educational and training opportunities, the fragmentation of educational and training provision, the lack of co-ordination and inadequate participation. It has also shown the discrepancies in both quantity and quality of provision between different racial groups, with Black pupils who formed the majority of the potential school population, the most disadvantaged. The chapter also demonstrated that the deeply fragmented and uncoordinated management structures resulted in an absence of any coherent policy formulations.

It has also shown the resistance and struggles of Black workers, their communities and students against apartheid between 1973-1976. These social upheavals, compounded by the underlying economic and manpower factors, rendered the apartheid state insecure. In response a number of Commissions of Inquiry were set up, which resulted in the planned re-orientation of South Africa's economic policy towards a free market ideology.

Similar discussions took place within education. The de Lange Commission into the state of education reported in 1981. The de Lange Report forms the central document of this thesis. Interesting themes have emerged from its analysis. The most important themes that emerged from the recommendations made by the de Lange Report were:

- a modular and open educational structure with the objective of increasing the opportunities for horizontal and vertical mobility
- a structurally integrated and coordinated system to replace previously separate systems
- balance between academic and vocational education in the school curriculum
- proposal for further investigation of a national certification body that would be responsible for standards of evaluation and certification in both academic and vocational education and training sectors

Apart from that, concepts such as levels, recognition of credits, access and lifelong learning were among the proposals made by the de Lange Committee. We can see that the proposal of a national certification system was there as long ago as 1981.

Apart from the criticisms that were levelled at the report, it can be safely stated that the de Lange Report is a landmark in the history of South African education and training reform and beyond. The rest of the thesis will show that other state reforms that followed took their lead from de Lange and began to look for a more effective interface between school-based education and post-school training.

In the training sector, the HSRC/NTB 's Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA was also a landmark. It has shown that the competency-based modular system for the apprenticeship system was already introduced in South Africa as early as 1984 and the influences of the British system and Australia were acknowledged in this report. It is important to keep in mind that this is well before the trade unions went to Australia in the early 1990s to borrow the competency model.

Chapter 6: Pre-election contestation

Background

The previous chapter has drawn attention to the struggles of Black workers and students against apartheid starting from the mid 1970s. These social upheavals, compounded by the decline in the economy and sanctions from the international community, weakened the apartheid state. This crisis forced the apartheid state to declare states of emergency in 1985 and 1986. The democratic forces started to become optimistic about political change and substantial policy developments occurred in South Africa in early 1990. On the 2nd February 1990, State President De Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC and other banned organisations, and committed his government to a negotiated resolution of the South African conflict. This meant that democratic forces were to come up with informed policies to guide the negotiations. Some of the major democratic forces included the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), an umbrella structure of anti-apartheid education organisations launched in 1985; the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI), which was formally mandated by the NECC in December 1990, to carry out an investigation into the nature and shape of a future education system; the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the African National Congress (ANC).

On the other hand, with the prospect of transition dawning, the Department of National Education (DNE) issued a document proposing a *Curriculum Model for Education in SA* (CUMSA) in 1991. This arose out of the need to

make education more relevant, rationalise the curriculum, eliminate unnecessary overlapping of subject content and redress other shortcoming (Committee of Heads of Departments 1991: 2)

A second policy initiative of the DNE's part was the *Education Renewal Strategy* (ERS). This was meant to renew and restructure the South African education system ahead of the existing deficiencies (DNE 1992).

From the above background, we can see that policy making was pursued in separate networks because of wider political conflict. Contrary to this scenario the NTB made an attempt to take on board other social players. In 1991, the then Minister of Manpower invited COSATU to nominate two representatives to the NTB, and those nominated were Adrienne Bird¹⁹ and Samuel Morotoba. Concerned with the need for a more effective national coordination of training, the NTB published a report entitled *Investigation into a National Training Strategy for the RSA* (NTB/HSRC 1991) prior to the invitation sent to COSATU. COSATU refused to endorse the strategy and proposed that the deliberations be set in motion again.

The subsequent year, 1992, was spent in battles about the way forward. COSATU wanted a more representative task force, and in early 1993, it was accepted that a broader task team should be established and all parties agreed to begin the process anew of negotiating a new National Training Strategy. This process culminated into a consensus document entitled the *National Training Strategy Initiative* (NTSI), which was published in 1994. It is important to note at this stage that even though the first national strategy commissioned by the NTB in 1991 was rejected, its content and meaning were reflected in the 1994 consensus document. The 1991 training strategy will be briefly analysed in this chapter.

The above descriptions provide the context in which this chapter develops. The chapter is divided into three broad sections. The first section will focus on two documents: the *Education Renewal Strategy* (DNE 1992) and the rejected NTB document, *Investigation into a National Training Strategy for the RSA* (HSRC/NTB 1991). The second section will review the mass democratic movement's reform

proposals, the NEPI and COSATU/ANC. The third section reviews the NTSI document of 1994.

Apart from documentary analysis, the section also draws from interviews with policy makers and other key informants, especially from the mass democratic movements.

The National Training Strategy (NTS)

The NTB through the HRSC, commissioned in 1989 a study called the National Training Strategy, to look at the particular problems affecting the South African training system, which was completed in 1991 (Human Sciences Research Council 1991). This was a culmination of research which commenced in 1984 with the HSRC/NTB *Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA*. A working committee was appointed consisting of experts that included senior bureaucrats from the HSRC, the NTB, the Department of Manpower, the National Manpower Commission and the Departments of the Education and Culture in the segregated parliamentary system. In addition, the South African Confederation of Labour, commerce, industry and the private sector were represented. There was also participation of 'Manpower' managers from a number of large corporations in the transport and mining sector. Representatives from higher education institutes and some parastatals concerned with development also participated. The South African Confederation of Labour, composed of only white workers, was the only trade union that participated. The absence of COSATU and its social partners was a cause for concern in the composition of the working committee.

The report made the following proposals: a modular competency-based curriculum for vocational education and training; greater mobility within the education and training system; a national system of vocational qualifications; the proposals for improving national co-ordination and the devolution of training to industry training boards. As we have seen, these proposals were made in earlier reforms and we will

¹⁹ Adrienne Bird was the national Training Organiser of NUMSA at the time and Samuel Morotoba was a shop steward at the time at a large motor assembly plant but also a participant in the NUMSA

see later that these are the same issues that will dominate the proposals of the democratic movement.

The section that follows will briefly discuss these proposals. The primary concern of this document was the lack of meaningful cooperation between different employers with regard to the coordination of training. As a result, no coherent national strategy existed. The report went on to propose a national certification body, which would ensure acceptable training standards and transferable skills:

The concept of a training qualification structure is that accredited modular training undertaken with one employer and fitting into the qualifications structure will be recognised for employment purposes by other firms within the same industry as well as by employers in other industries. Recognition will be given because the course is well structured and is competency based resulting in the holders of a specific qualification having known competencies which are of value in employment. The design of such a structure should be the responsibility of an independent body such as the National Council for Vocational Qualifications in the United Kingdom and the Department of Manpower, the NTB and the AATB should all be represented on such a body. In the design of courses consideration should be given to courses such as those leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQ) in the United Kingdom as well as the Traineeship System of Australia (HSRC/NTB 1991: 264)

Surely, as we shall see later, this is what evolved to be SAQA and the NQF. We will also see later borrowings from the NVQs and Australia. This explains why COSATU rejected this document because they wanted to be part of these important proposals.

The 1991 NTB report also expressed some concerns about the limited articulation or mobility between the formal and non-formal education sectors:

There is an absence of links between the training system and the formal education system and no accreditation system which would enable recognition by the formal education sector of qualifications obtained in the non-formal sector (HSRC/NTB 1991: 2)

As we have seen, the need for greater articulation between the formal and nonformal education sectors has been on the South African agenda since the early 1980s (HSRC 1981).

It can be seen that the NTB reports did not advocate a unified system of national qualifications but rather a dual structure of accreditation. In such a system, vocational accreditation would occur at industry level (Mahomed 1996). However, the reports argued for a single, unified Department of Education and Training. The 1991 NTB report suggested that the above implies 'one department having the dual functions of education and training (HSRC/NTB 1991: 266). The case of Australia was given as an example where the Commonwealth Government had a Department of Education, Employment and Training (ibid. 266). Another possibility suggested in the report was to have a superior body such as the State President's Training and Education Council from which the two departments would receive orders (ibid. 266).

Much of the focus in the report on the issue of integrating education and training was to do with the concern regarding many black youths who left the school system without adequate schooling, who were deprived of their education by the apartheid system and who would find it difficult to train if they did obtain a job (ibid. 263). Large numbers of workers were illiterate and ennumerate, 'making training very difficult because methods have to be found to teach skills without resorting to writing' (ibid. 127). Learners do need a solid general educational base for successful vocational training. Later in this chapter we will see that COSATU and its allies were also concerned with these issues.

The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)

In 1992 the DNE published *'Education Renewal Strategy: Management Solutions for Education on South Africa'*. Like the De Lange investigation, this ERS comprised working groups of 'senior specialists from the ranks of education' appointed under the direction of the Committee of the Heads of Education Departments (Badat 1992). Like the de Lange report, the ERS arose as a result of continued criticism of the education system. The then education model was not relevant to learners and employers as it was failing in the preparation involved in transforming learners into workers (DNE 1992: 8-9). Lack of relevance and learner choice biased towards

academically oriented study programmes were central arguments in this report (ibid. 5).

In response to these failings, the ERS pointed to ‘an urgent need for more learners to follow vocationally-oriented or vocational study programmes’ (ibid. 5). The ERS report made a subtle distinction between academically oriented and vocationally oriented routes at senior secondary phase, arguing that both were formative in that both sought to satisfy the four broad educational aims of the ERS. These were:

- The development of the character of learners
- The development of the inherent potential of learners
- The preparation of learners for occupational competency and economic independence
- The education of learners towards responsible and useful citizenship (ibid. 47-48).

In fact, the ERS did not differentiate between general and vocationally-oriented education but rather supported a continuum of choices between packages ranging from predominantly academic to predominantly vocational subjects (Mahommed 1996: 24; Kraak 2002: 83).

In other words, the ERS proposed a tripartite form of post-compulsory phase (general education, vocational education, and industrial training), a move consistent with other international developments such as the system of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) emerging in England at the time. (DNE 1991: 35). These proposals would be relevant much later in the review of the NQF beginning in the 2000s.

Another area of continuity with de Lange concerned enhancing student mobility between formal and non-formal education²⁰. The ERS noted that in most cases

²⁰ The ERS document understood non-formal education as vocational training provided at or by any institution with view to obtaining a qualification other than a degree, certificate or diploma instituted

vocational training was not capped by a qualification, as a result of lack of a systematic qualification structure for vocational training. This limited the possibility of linking a system of vocational qualifications to the formal education system, and in so doing, failed to offer 'every young person the opportunity to earn a nationally recognised formal educational or vocational training qualification (DNE 1992: 27).

To enhance the linkage between formal and non-formal education, the ERS proposed the establishment of a function for the national certification of vocational training (within the framework of a national qualification structure and a system for vocational education and training (ibid. 28). This meant that within the concept of a single system of education and training, both formal education and the vocational training sector exist as distinguishable subsystems, each with their own aims (ibid. 27), but linked by a qualification system that is 'based on standards of knowledge and skills (or competencies) and levels of literacy required by the employer' (ibid. 27).

The report went on to argue that the aims of these subsystems should be clearly defined and the relationships and interfaces between them, clearly set out and described (ibid. 28). The ERS argued that students should obtain credits for further study and proposed the creation of clear career paths for continued vocational training. In actual fact the ERS proposed the reshaping of institutional character by suggesting that colleges of further education should offer transfer credits for study at university and technikon and this would facilitate mobility between the post-secondary and tertiary sectors.

These proposals outlined the ERS document are crucial to the debates that follow about the possible forms the South African NQF might take. Do you go for a seamless system with no distinction between education and vocational training or they exist side by side with links between them? These are the debates that are shaping the current NQF review in South Africa.

under or by any law relating to formal education. The non-formal education sector has been referred to as the vocational training system since it normally provides for vocational training qualifications

The mass democratic movements' reform agenda

Previous sections have sketched out key themes that have emerged from the analysis of proposals put forward by the government's White-led Department of National Education (DNE) and Department of Manpower (DoM) from the de Lange report in 1981 to the Education Renewal Strategy in 1992. Consistent with these proposals was the need for linking academic education and vocational training. To enhance this linkage, proposals were made for the establishment of a national certification body that would be responsible for certification in both formal and nonformal education and training sectors. A modular competency-based curriculum for academic education and vocational training was proposed to enhance greater mobility within the education and training system. Also important was the reference given to the experiences of such countries as Britain and Australia. As we shall see in this section, most of the proposals put forward by the democratic movement also drew from these countries.

When it was inevitable that political negotiations were commencing, the trade unionists and the democratic movement started to move beyond opposition and started the construction of alternative policies, initiatives and practices on the basis on which to govern (Muller 1987). This section is going to draw from the proposals put forward by the democratic movement. The purpose is to link their proposals with those of the White government. The themes highlighted in the paragraph above will be followed through in reform initiatives proposed by the ANC/COSATU alliance. Apart from establishing the continuities, the section also highlights some of the key players who have been influential in driving these reforms into a national qualifications framework.

The first to be considered is the work of the Black-led (but with a lot of key Whites) mass-based National Education Co-ordination Committee (NECC), a popular organisation of students, academics, teachers, parents and workers, launched in 1985 to co-ordinate the activities of education social movements (Unterhalter et al 1991).

linked to specific careers (DNE 1992: 26).

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)'s (one of the largest COSATU affiliates) Vocational Project and COSATU's Participatory Research Project (PRP) followed this in 1991. In the same year ANC published a '*Discussion Paper for the ANC on Education*' in which it sketched out its aims for the transformation of the education system. In 1992 the ANC established an independent policy-research agency, the Centre for Educational Policy Development (CEPD), which helped to formulate ANC's education policies. In 1993, '*A Framework for Lifelong learning: A Unified Multi-Path Approach to Education and Training*' was drafted jointly by the ANC and COSATU. The COSATU PRP also produced its education and training proposals in the same year. The CEPD published in its "Yellow Book", *Policy Framework for Education and training* in 1994, intended to inform the thinking of the ANC government. These initiatives will be discussed in the sections that follow.

The National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI).

The NECC launched its education policy initiative, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) in 1990 to investigate the nature and shape of a future education system. This project brought together over three hundred researchers into thirteen working groups. These included academics, teachers, students, political activists and labour. The research groups focussed on the following areas: adult basic education; adult education; curriculum; early childhood; education planning, system and structure; governance and administration; human resources development (including technical vocational education); language; library and information services; post-secondary education; support services; and teacher education. The aim of NEPI was to 'interrogate policy options in all areas of education within a value framework derived from the ideals of the broad democratic movement' (Kraak 1993: 2). This value framework emphasised five key principles: non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress (NEPI 1993). We can see that NEPI's mandate was not to produce recommendations, but rather to give a critical analysis of all emerging alternatives including those derived internationally and those advocated by the state and the opposition. One of my interviewees commented that NEPI tried

not to take any sides of the policy options proposed, leaving it to key players to negotiate and take decisions (PC 25, 25/06/04).

In 1993, NEPI published its findings and policy options in thirteen volumes. The Framework Report adopted in Kraak's (1993) terms a systemic restructuring approach, seeking fundamental rather than incremental changes²¹. This meant that NEPI's policy options proposed a radical restructuring of the apartheid education system and replacing it with a non-racial democratic system. This thesis will argue that in actual fact the proposals were incremental rather a break from the past.

Central to my argument is Michael Young's contribution to the NEPI Working Group on Human Resources (Young 1992). It was just two years after the publication by the IPPR of the British Baccalaureate (Finegold et al., 1990), of which Michael Young was a core-author. Much of Young's contribution to the debates was based on the kind of analysis that was developed in the IPPR report. The view that shaped the IPPR report is quoted in full from what Michael Young wrote in 2001:

A second and closely related theme in theorising about the curriculum in the early 1990s was the claim that the changes in the organisation of work pointed out by Piore and Sabel and others were undermining the traditional divisions between mental and manual labour. This view shaped the very influential publication in the UK of A British Baccalaureate (Finegold et al., 1990) and many of the publications of the Post-16 Education Centre at the Institute of Education at the time. It also influenced my contribution to the NEPI Working Group on Human Resources (Young 1992) and the later debates and proposals from the reconstituted National Training Board in the 1992-1994 period. The argument was that if divisions between mental and manual labour were being undermined by economic change, then academic/vocational divisions within the educational and training system must be sustaining them. There was, therefore a powerful case for an integrated (or what in the UK was referred to as unified) system that brought together education and training and general and vocational education. The idea of integration was an especially powerful one in South Africa in the early 1990s as it offered a clear alternative to the divisions that were such a dominant feature of the old apartheid system (Young 2001: 25).

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the debates on integration reflect the basic assumptions underpinning Piore and Sabel's view of the post-Fordist economy. It has been argued that such assumptions had their limitations and some critics (Maller and Dwolatsky 1993) were sceptical about the application of the post-Fordist model in

²¹ Incremental change was advocated by the outgoing authorities in the education and training sectors.

South African manufacturing. It has been suggested that the form of production in South Africa might be changing under the impact of globalisation and new technologies from the old fordist division of labour. In actual fact, globalisation and advances in technology have brought complex divisions within and across societies.

In summary, the key issue that emerged out of the NEPI deliberations was the option of integration of education and training. As we have seen from Young's point of view, integration was based on post-Fordist principles about changes in the organisation of work and as we shall see later, this became the guiding philosophy of the proposals of the ANC/COSATU and the democratic movement. However, this was not a new idea in South Africa. In the previous reforms, we have seen concerns about linkages between formal and nonformal education and the training sectors.

The role of COSATU in education and training policy

COSATU was formed in 1985 at the peak of worsening economic conditions, boycotts and strikes (Cross and Chisholm 1990). COSATU's engagement in education and training policy debates was driven from the outset by the need to address the inequalities caused by apartheid and an equitable skill-focussed training system that will allow the black workers to perform the most complex tasks in every industry (COSATU 1991:39). One of my interviewees has this to say about COSATU's policy work in this early period:

The involvement of COSATU during this early period was a devoted resistance to the differentiated educational and segregated training systems, which have produced people with poor education or no education at all, and a low level of skills. COSATU's aim was to provide the skills necessary for economic growth and for handling new technology (PC 02, 11/08/04).

In response to a question why COSATU, a trade union organisation (with a role of representing workers' conditions of service) was involved in issues to do with education and training, the trade unionist explained,

Most of our workers who inherited the Bantu Education system did not have the basic education needed to undertake some training programmes. We saw the need to talk

about integrating basic education programmes with training so as to upgrade their skills. Issues to do with workers' conditions of service like salaries are connected to their qualifications, so in addressing these issues we were drawn into education and training debates (PC 29, 13/08/04).

The argument for a shift from a divided to an integrated system had a particular significance for trade unionists. COSATU linked the integration of education and training to the possibility of improving career and training opportunities through a single qualifications structure. COSATU's push for the integration of education and training is best understood through the work of one of its largest affiliates, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).

The Work of NUMSA

NUMSA has been active since the formation of COSATU in 1985. In 1988 when negotiations and political change were inevitable, Alec Erwin²², the then National Education Secretary of NUMSA called for his officials to start preparing for new training policies (Bird 1990). Although NUMSA believed that it was government's responsibility to carry out the reconstruction, they also argued that it should be based on full participation of progressive trade unions. Alec Erwin commented that the role of the state in regard to training would be to

- Provide an effective educational base on which training can be built
- Stimulate investment in training, as the private sector generally invests very little in this area because of low returns
- Co-ordinate certification so that workers can transfer from formal to non-formal education, from industry to industry and from company to company (Bird 1990: 11)

This vision of integration was seen 'as an integral part of broader restructuring which aims to address the problems of unemployment, poverty and general social deprivation' (ibid. 11). As have been shown already, mobility between formal to nonformal was de Lange's phrase.

NUMSA's reform agenda was being driven by a severe shortage of skills and knowledge and started to develop programmes that would address their workers' needs. The major concern was the legacy of 'Bantu education, which has created a poor educational base on which to build vocational training' (ibid. 14).

We have seen that some of these issues being raised here have been proposed in de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the HSRC/NTB Report (1994). However, NUMSA went further than just recommending the links between formal and non-formal education and between industries. It started to move beyond recommendations and started to propose meaningful strategies of how that mobility could be achieved.

NUMSA began its preparation by establishing a number of Research and Development Groups (RDG's) to consider new training policy recommendations. In 1989, a group of 27 shop stewards were appointed as Training RDG's. This included Adrienne Bird, the then National Training Organiser and Education Secretary of NUMSA. These stewards were drawn from different constituencies based on the then training system's regional apprenticeship committee to undergo a period of training and to assess the inadequacies of existing training and discuss responses on training questions. Leave from work was negotiated to allow participants to travel and research training models in other countries. In 1990, the group travelled to different international destinations. The following countries were visited: West Germany, Sweden, Italy, UK, Australia and Zimbabwe (ibid. 15). It is important to explain at this point that out of the six international visits carried out, it is only the visit to Australia report that is on record. Adrienne Bird went to Australia and filed a report, hence my discussion that follows will be centred on the Australian influence.

Adrienne Bird explained that whilst in Australia they visited their Technical and Further Education Colleges and also sat in training modules courses to see what was happening. This research committee was impressed by what was happening in Australia and then started to work out what was applicable to the South African

²² Alec Erwin was appointed the Deputy Minister of finance and then the minister of Trade and Industry in the first democratic government.

context. The one thing that was relevant to South Africa but was not covered by the Australian training model was the issue of adult literacy. The committee's task was to come up with strategies of integrating these literacy needs with training. This culminated to what was known as NUMSA's Vocational Project.

It is important to note that the need to integrate literacy programmes with training was also expressed in the previous HSRC/NTB reports because of the effects of Bantu Education, which has created a poor educational base on which to build vocational training. We have also seen that HSRC/NTB reports also gave reference to Australia's Traineeship System as well as the UK's NVQs. Bird (1990) acknowledged that what they were proposing in NUMSA's Vocational Project was not new and she made a reference to previous reports as follows:

This reality is acknowledged in the recent HSRC/NTB report on 'Skills Training in the RSA' and underlies a number of the recommendations made in the report (p. 14).

The Training RDG's recommendations were tabled to the union's National Congress in May 1991 and after their acceptance, were tabled and approved at COSATU's National Congress in July 1991. The recommendations stressed the need for a job grading system and for career paths that would allow workers to move from one job or industry to another and from one grade to the next (from sweeper to engineer); to earn equal wages for equivalent work and to be paid time off for training. This was going to be achieved through the development of competency standards and training modules with a co-ordinated accreditation system. This approach, as we have seen in Chapter 4, was consistent with Australia's competency-based reform in school education and the new vocationalism of the late 1980s. The influence of Australia in the NUMSA project was also bolstered by the invitation of two Australian trade unionists, Chris Lloyd, who joined NUMSA in 1992, whose focus area was industrial restructuring and Alaister Machin, who became part of COSATU's Participatory Research Project and focussed on the National Training Strategy and the National Qualifications Framework.

COSATU's National Congress in July 1991 passed the following resolutions:

We re-affirm our commitment to work for a single, non-racial and non-sexist educational system geared to meet the needs and aspirations of society as a whole. Apartheid education is an instrument of domination. We are committed to destroying all forms of apartheid, open and disguised, in the current educational system...curricula which develop literacy, numeracy, and the ability to think critically...a formal education system which is not purely academic but is geared to providing scientific and technological skills which can contribute to the development of our country. There is a serious shortage of skilled workers. Large number of adults, victims of the government's policies, lack proper basic education. Many lack literacy and numeracy skills and are unable to benefit from training programmes. Urgent steps are needed to provide extensive basic education and training. We need skills to run industries, to shape and develop economic policies, to build a democratic society and enhance job creation (Extract from Bird 1992: 192).

The Congress also outlined its basic principles for training along the following lines:

All workers have a right to paid education and training leave. Education and training should continue throughout the worker's life to enable him/her to keep pace with technological change and develop his or her abilities. There must be clear links between formal schooling, adult education, industrial training and other education and training systems (e.g. for youth or unemployed). Training must link to grading and pay. Workers should be able to advance along a career path through training. Training must lead to national or industrial certificates. There must be provision for recognition (and pay) for skills which workers already have (ibid. 193).

The linkage between education (both formal and Adult Basic education) and industrial training was supposed to be through 'a national certification system which ensures national recognition and portability for knowledge and skills acquired' (ibid. 185). For this to happen, a framework was proposed, within which all industry and allied education and training boards must function' (ibid.186). At this point in time, COSATU had not come up with a detailed proposal of what that framework would look like, but the Australian Industry Occupational (career path) Classification was used as an example of such a developed model. In this model, industrial career paths are articulated to the National Training Board's competency levels. Mobility across industries is possible through the existence of common core modules of education, which are applicable across industries.

According to one of my interviewees, the proposals for the linkage of formal education, adult basic education and vocational skill formation programmes under a

single certification structure were not a denial of the relative autonomy of these different sub-systems which must be given their institutional expression within the overall framework (PC 9, 7/10/04).

COSATU's resolution on education and training was summarised through my interview with Adrienne Bird as follows:

The resolution called for a ladder-like framework in which workers could enter at any point and progress upwards in meaningful stages-from unskilled to semi-skilled and skilled levels, and beyond, to para-professional and professional levels. The training ladder was complemented by an adult basic education and training framework to ensure that adults who had been denied a general education as children could still access and climb up the learning framework (Bird, 11/08/04)

This summarises the COSATU's central theme and that of other social players for pushing for the integration of education and training in subsequent policy debates. It can also be seen that these resolutions of education and training were linked to goals of empowerment and redress of past injustices, which are connected with ideas of economic reconstruction proposed in previous reforms.

Adrienne Bird was asked during the interview to make a comparison between what they were proposing in COSATU and what was proposed in the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981). She did not make a direct connection in terms of borrowing from de Lange, but she did acknowledge that:

much of the de Lange report focussed on the lack of mobility between formal and nonformal education. It maintained that the cause of this was the rigid character of apartheid education. COSATU's vision and that of our social partners was the integration of education and the training sector, and that is different (Bird, 11/08/04).

The position this thesis is taking is that the proposals made by COSATU were not very different from those proposed by de Lange and other HSRC/NTB reports we have discussed. According to Adrienne Bird, the crucial distinction lay in their emphasis on education and training, whereas, de Lange was mainly focussing on formal and nonformal education. On the other side, the argument is that de Lange and other reforms proposed by the outgoing White government, understood

nonformal education as part of the vocational training system. Therefore nonformal education could be regarded as the world of training as well.

Some of the respondents, who participated in the de Lange Committee, were convinced that the de Lange Report was a watershed in the history of education and training in South Africa. They understood some of the many criticisms that were levelled at the report, but in spite of these, they stated that the report introduced a new era in the education system. They acknowledged that they did not have the NQF concept at that time, but they did have the same ideas that are being expressed in current debates on the integration of education and training. Schalk Engelbrecht, who was appointed coordinator of the de Lange investigation in 1980 pointed to his concluding remarks on the article he wrote about the de Lange Report later in 1992:

Against this background I would like to postulate that, in many ways, the de Lange Report will come back again and again in future educational discussions and plannings (Engelbrecht 1992:512).

Surely, de Lange laid a foundation for a new education and training dispensation. It was not clear from the interviews and from the report itself the origins of the proposals that were put forward in the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981). One of my respondents who was in one of the Working Committees pointed to the influential *Education Sector Policy Paper* published by the World Bank in 1980, giving an indication of what might have influenced de Lange.

It was argued (Kraak 1992) that the strategies being developed by COSATU were part of a broader paradigm in the union's policies based on post-fordist work organisation, which focussed on flexible specialisation as the only way nation states could become globally competitive. Flexible specialisation involved high-tech, high quality production by highly skilled workers, and this depended on co-operation between government, labour and business (Von Holdt 1991). The much criticised apartheid education and the low level of skills were seen as the major barriers to economic growth, and education and training strategies were seen as the tool with

which to overcome this barrier (Samson 1999). Foley (1994) summarised the role of education in relation to flexible specialisation as follows:

Education is to contribute to flexible specialisation by focusing on vocational training. Education systems, it is argued, should concentrate on people's competencies-their skills, knowledge and values-to enable them to move across jobs, from one sector of the economy to the other, and even from one country to another. Curricula should be redesigned along competency-based lines, enabling the recognition of existing competence, as well as the more effective articulation of different levels of education and training. Education is seen as one component of a comprehensive approach to workplace restructuring, one which includes changes in industrial relations, technology and workplace organisation. The aim is a highly skilled, mobile workforce which will help to make industry internationally competitive (p. 124).

This development has not been without its critics. It is increasingly recognised that the highly skilled mobile workers of the future will be a minority, and the majority, will be in peripheral jobs with no long term employment prospects (Foley 1994).

To give effect to these resolutions, COSATU established in October 1992 the Participatory Research Project (PRP), to develop and restructure education and training policies that reflected the needs of workers. This PRP involved trained representatives of all COSATU affiliates and other mass organisations.

The contribution of COSATU to policy development can be traced first through its PRP, which drew from NUMSA's project. Secondly, in 1991, COSATU was invited by the Minister of Manpower for the first time to participate in the discussions of the NTB. Adrienne Bird, the chief architect of the NUMSA project, was elected to represent COSATU on the NTB. This was followed by the second nomination of Samuel Morotoba (a shop steward at the time at a large motor assembly plant but also a participant in the NUMSA Training RDG). Thirdly, COSATU was represented in NEPI's main structures and some of its officials contributed papers to NEPI working groups (Bird 1992; Favish & Omar 1992). In the section that follows, we are going to see COSATU's collaboration with the ANC in drafting a joint framework.

A Framework for Lifelong Learning: A unified, multi-path approach to education and training (ANC/COSATU 1993).

Given the past divided and segmented education and training provision in South Africa, it is not surprising that key theme in the new thinking about equitable access and redress in post-apartheid South Africa has been an integrated approach to education and training. This joint ANC/COSATU education and training policy initiative, as I mentioned earlier, envisioned integration occurring at three levels. The first level of integration is the removal of racially based divisions and inequalities in the education system; the second level is the integration of the fragmented and under-resourced training provision; and the third level is the integration of the two previously separate education and training systems (ANC/COSATU 1993: 12).

King (1998: 6) commented that while the first level of integration has been anticipated given the past history, two other issues influenced the second and third levels. The first influence was the desire to make the new system responsive to the changing nature of work, technology and the labour process. The second influence of the integration of education and training (open to all) was the desire to assist the previously deprived South Africans from basic education.

What was particular about this document was its exploration of two possible models of integrating education and training. One approach was the “traditional two ladders with bridges” and the second one, which this document proposed, was a “unified, multi-path” approach to education and training (ANC/COSATU 1993: 13).

The first model with two ladders and bridges was represented as a vision of the German dual system (*ibid.*). In this model there are two tracks, one for academic, general education and the other one for technical, vocational education and training with linkages between them. This is the model that was being considered by the outgoing Departments of Manpower and National Education and some employers. The ANC/COSATU (1993) document rejected this model for four reasons.

The first reason given was that South Africa had less national resources than Germany and therefore could not be able to create parity between academic and vocational tracks.

The second problem highlighted was that the model did not address literacy and numeracy problems of adults who inherited Bantu education. This argument is not convincing²³ because the same problem was encountered in the Australian training model but NUMSA came up with strategies of integrating this literacy and numeracy needs with training.

The third problem was that the German model lacked mobility between one job or one sector to another 'since there is no underpinning for portability of skills in the form of generic knowledge' (p.13).

The fourth problem was that the model did not permit a combination of academic and vocational learning due to the rigidity of the two ladders.

In view of the four problems highlighted, the ANC and COSATU joint framework advocated for a unified, multi-path model, which would be built around the following three principles:

- a single department for education and training with statutory advisory bodies;
- a single qualifications structure; and
- a curriculum system which is based on articulation and equivalency between different learning contexts (ibid. 13-14).

It was claimed that the model being proposed here would 'ensure that there is integration in the provision of education and training, hence no polarity of status in

²³ A different perspective was given to me in an informal interview with Hubert Hartmann, an Education Advisor of the German Department of Planning and Development at a conference in Edinburgh. It seem to him that the South African delegation, which included Adrienne Bird found it very difficult to understand the Germany dual system because most of the documents were written in German and they just couldn't understand them. Therefore Australian and English models became more attractive than the German one (Hartmann, April 2005).

provision can result' (ibid. 14). This meant that there would be equal provision of education and training opportunities regardless of race, colour or anything. Such a model will also facilitate maximum flexibility in learning provision, maximum portability of skills and knowledge and maximum access to the education and training system by different kinds of learners (ibid.).

In this document, the unified model proposed a single Department of Lifelong Learning²⁴, which would delegate most of its responsibilities to a new statutory body, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (ibid. 15). The term has been used in the New Zealand context. This new concept replaces the role of a National Certification Council, which was proposed in earlier proposals of the former regime. In this model Sector Education and Training Boards (SETBs) would replace Industry Training Boards. The function of these SETBs would be to 'determine education and training requirements for the different levels in a career path²⁵ recognised across the sector' (ibid. 10). Mobility within these levels will be determined by 'the number of modules completed at each level' (ibid.). The model went on to suggest that mobility across different sectors would be facilitated 'by the compulsory provision of certain general education elements at each level' (ibid.). This was an attempt to link career path levels with education levels and the model proposed a combined twelve-level structure, with levels 1,2,3 and 5 still to be developed (ibid. 9).

Under this model, the different levels of learning and different learning contexts would be brought together by a unified qualifications structure as follows:

- The General Education Certificate, a qualification that marks the end of compulsory schooling and adult basic education.

²⁴ This vision of life long learning would allow a much larger number of learners to access the education and training system throughout their life time and through a wide range of delivery mechanisms (whether through formal or non-formal learning, as part of work or work creation mechanisms, etc). This was similar to what was proposed in the de Lange report (1981) of interspersing education with work throughout life.

²⁵ A career path in a sector such as engineering would enable a production worker to advance to an artisan status, and then to a technician, and then from a technician to a technologist and on to become a professional engineer.

- The National Higher Certificate, a qualification that marks the end of post-compulsory schooling, integrating general education and vocational education and training²⁶.
- Diplomas and degrees, a qualification that marks the end of studies in colleges, technikons and universities (ibid. 22-23, 26).

In this model, the competency-based reform language which was used in earlier discussions was replaced by an outcomes approach.

Whereas an outcomes approach is a way of defining a curriculum in terms of learning aims, a competency model refers to a particular form of outcome-usually the performance of a narrowly defined task in a workplace (or by simulation). What is being suggested here is a notion of educational outcomes that is broad enough to include any learning experience that might traditionally have been included in an academic course, a college based vocational course or a work based programme. This notion of outcomes maximises the likelihood of achieving two of the aims of these proposals, (a) ensuring the progression and continuing education of students, and (b) achieving the flexibility to enable students to enter and exist the system at different points and to transfer from one route to another (ibid. 27-28).

It is clear that the outcomes-based approach advocated here would refer to the application of intellectual or conceptual skills such as problem solving, teamwork, planning and organisation rather than the performance of specific practical skills.

It can be seen that the emphasis in this document of social justice/redress/empowerment was inseparable from re-entry to the education and training system and re-entry according to King (1998) meant, 'recourse to a common qualification system' (p. 6). This will later develop into a common qualifications framework.

²⁶ Academic, vocational and training qualifications would not be distinguished. The National Higher Certificate would be the same regardless of where learning took place and tertiary institutions would recognise such a certificate however acquired. Such certificates would be based on clear standards assessed as broad competencies/outcomes with equivalence across learning contexts. The curriculum would be modular and outcomes based to allow for a flexible combination of subject choices and contexts. In theory, this would allow flexible articulation from work, school or other areas into tertiary education.

One of my respondents who happened to be one of the authors of this document summarised the idea of a nationally integrated curriculum with a single qualification structure, built under a unified multi-path model as follows:

It is a unified model because it is trying to bring the previously divided education and training departments together under a single Department of Lifelong Learning. The model is multi-path taking into account the different contexts in which learning takes place: be it in the school classroom, the factory-training centre, night school or by correspondence. The curriculum is integrated in that the previous academic and vocational courses would be redesigned in the form of modules to make up what is referred to as a 'module bank' (consisting of both academic and vocational modules). There would be core and optional modules and learners would be required to complete a specific number of modules at given levels and these are selected from the bank. This would enable learners to gain a qualification by obtaining credits in a given number and range of modules. This is all made possible through nationally determined single set of standards for accreditation and certification (PC 3, 20/09/04).

Given the past history of different standards in the provision of education and training in South Africa, it is justified to propose and emphasise the need of a single set of standards for all.

The ANC education policy

The ANC was unbanned in 1990 and thereafter, it started to develop the vision of lifelong learning, the provision of quality education and the integration of education and training (Chisholm 1997). To advance this agenda, ANC's Education Department established the CEPD in 1993, which developed ANC education and training policies under the directorship of Trevor Coombe. Its mission was to develop a single education and training system geared towards the improvement of quality and relevance of knowledge and skills for the labour market and the overall process of redress and reconstruction. The CEPD was considered as a professionally autonomous institution, providing well-researched policy support to the ANC. The CEPD worked collaboratively with COSATU, policy analysts in universities, NGOs and mass-based movements. Although a consultative approach was adopted by the CEPD deliberations, critics felt the process of consultation did not include grassroots players and was only limited to workshops with individuals invited (De Clercq 1997).

The first major contribution of the CEPD was the development of the draft Policy Framework for Education and Training for the ANC (ANC 1994a). One of my respondents acknowledged that the broad framework that emerged from the NEPI process had a powerful influence on this project (PC 25, 6/10/04).

Throughout the CEPD document the integration of education and training is stressed. The document started with a critique of the education and training system under apartheid. It believed that the separation of education from training had 'contributed significantly to the situation where most of our people are under-educated, under-skilled, and under-prepared for full participation in social, economic and civic life' (ANC 1994a: 10). This meant that the end of apartheid would result in the total transformation of the whole system in terms of knowledge and skills. The document proposed the development of a national qualifications framework as a policy device through which an integrated education and training system could be achieved (ibid. 10).

The integrated system would seek to link the previously divided academic and vocational qualifications and skills through this qualifications framework; 'link one level of learning to another and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in the education and training system'; recognise learning acquired through experience and informal training and this would be assessed and credited towards a qualification (ibid.). As the joint framework document (ANC/COSATU 1993), a national standards and qualification structure, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was proposed to ensure this integration. SAQA would be responsible for accreditation, certification and maintenance of national standards (ibid. 18). There was also emphasis on the need for common standards for the education and training system:

There shall be nationally determined standards for accreditation and certification for formal and non-formal education and training, with due recognition of prior learning and experience (ibid. 4).

One of the representatives in ANC Education Department explained the point in this way:

In brief, this approach to education and training emphasises the need for flexible skills development which can be transferred from one job to another, which is based on nationally recognised standards and which allows access to formal education. The reality in apartheid South Africa was that even where workers had participated in literacy courses, these were not recognised and did not give credits towards or equivalencies to formal school standards. It was not possible for a worker completing the course to enter formal education or to move from one company to another. The challenge with this approach is to be able to determine the learning that these workers already have in order to accredit them (PC 11, 4/08/04).

This document highlighted the rationale for the integration of education and training as follows:

First, the need for equity and redress; second, the need to continually upgrade skill levels in line with the rapidly changing and dynamic nature of the world economy; third, to recognise the validity and interdependence of all forms of knowledge and the value of prior learning and experience by integrating education and training systems under a single national credit-based qualifications framework (ibid. 15).

From the ANC/COSATU perspective, the integration of education and training was not only linked to globalisation and changes in the world economy, but also to broader goals of equity and redress of past injustices. It is also important to note that the document recognised the interdependence of all forms of knowledge, an observation that forms the basis of current debates in South Africa.

In addition to the three certification levels that were proposed in the joint ANC/COSATU framework, a further three Adult Basic Education certificated levels prior to the General Education Certificate were proposed (ibid. 18).

From my point of view, the key issue that emerged from this ANC document is that the fragmented, separate and unequal nature of the apartheid education and training system has had profound effects on the shortage of skills in South Africa and the separate systems have also created disparity between academic and vocational education. 'The education and training systems follow separate and unequal paths

which limit career choice and belittle vocational education' (ibid. 109). The new system being proposed here was going to create parity of esteem between vocational and academic education and was also going to bring into a single framework the informally trained, low skilled and the inadequately schooled South Africans.

So far in the sections analysed, we have seen that the DNE and the DoM, through the NTB, formulated their policies separately. However, the NTB later invited COSATU to participate in its deliberations. On the mass democratic movement side, although COSATU initially formulated its participatory research projects separately, it later on worked jointly with the ANC and the NTB. On one side, the white government policy makers in their policy formulation processes, produced some recommendations seeking incremental changes in response to political and economic pressures. On the other side, the NEPI process restricted itself to policy options with the consideration that the forthcoming government would make decisions. Even though COSATU and the CEPD also made recommendations, their concern was systemic transformation, reconstruction of the education and training system rather than just reforming the system.

In the next section, we will see how these opposing camps became more interrelated and represented a move away from unilateral policy formulation by separate institutions into relationships of compromise and negotiations. It was becoming clear on the part of the White government that circumstances were changing and these changes were going to see the opposition taking over as the new government. This shift in context saw the rejection of policy formulation by separate institutions and the adoption of an interactive process.

The National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI).

We have already seen that COSATU joined the NTB in 1991 and rejected the NTS report and proposed the restructuring of the Task Team. COSATU wanted the Task Team to be more representative and proposed the inclusion of labour (employee

organisations), employer organisations (business), government and providers of education and training (NTB 1994: Foreword).

In negotiating the terms of reference of the Task Team, government wanted the NTB to be concerned only with training and education departments to have the responsibility of education. COSATU was of the opinion that education and training be considered jointly. COSATU was supported in these proposals by the business sector (PC 20, 04/11/04).

In response to COSATU and the business sector's proposals, the NTB agreed on the establishment of a broader Task Team and in 1993 the NTSI was launched. In the new Task Team, COSATU and the Federation of South African Labour Unions (FEDSAL) represented labour. The Department of National Education, Department of Education and Culture and the Department of Manpower represented government. Among the employer representatives were Transnet, Eskom, Chamber of Mines, Engineering Council of SA, Steel and Engineering Industry Federation of SA. Providers of vocational training were represented by a member of the Committee of Technikon Principals, a member of the Federal Committee of Technical College Principals and a member from the Association of Regional Training Centres (NTSI 1994). One striking thing about this representation was the absence of the University sector. Technikons and Technical Colleges were represented.

The main purpose of the Task Team was to formulate recommendations on a National Training Strategy and to get the job done, several working committees were established. The working committees established were as follows:

- Environment Scan
- Integration of education and training; competencies and career paths, and certification
- Training of trainers
- Adult basic education and access to training
- Supporting infrastructures; facilities and infrastructures; incentives, and finance

- Governance
- International comparators and
- Legislation (p. 12).

The outcome of these working committees was a consensus report, known as the National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI), which was finally published in April 1994. Its production was based on twelve principles: integration, relevance, credibility, coherence and flexibility, standards, legitimacy, access, articulation, progression, portability, recognition of prior learning and guidance of learners (p 8-11).

It is important to note that although these principles were referring to education and training, 'the Task Team's activities concentrated on their interpretation in the context of training' (ibid. 8). It seems to me that these principles were drawn from a range of constituencies including the DNE and democratic movements. For instance, the issue of relevance was used in the de Lange report and the ERS referring to the education model which was not relevant to learners and employers as it was failing to prepare learners into workers (DNE 1992: 8-9). The Guidance of learners was used in the de Lange report when it recommended that 'school going children should receive vocational guidance at school in order to equip them for their future careers' (HSRC 1981: 46). Issues to do with integration, access, standards, recognition of prior learning were consistent with the democratic movements' reform initiatives.

The Task Team investigated the use of these principles in other countries and identified certain aspects that could be considered in the South African context. The following countries were selected for comparative study: Australia, Brazil, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Tanzania, United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. This section will briefly focus on the report's findings on the first principle that is integration.

The report found out that integration was not achieved by formal legal links between education and training (NTB 1994: 21). It was also established that none of the countries studied had developed a National Qualifications Framework for both

education and training (ibid. 22). A framework for vocational qualifications was in use in the United Kingdom (NVQ) and a General National Vocational Qualification meant to create parity between vocational subjects and academic A-levels (ibid.). Australia was reported to be putting a framework in place.

We have seen before that ANC/COSATU were advocating an integrated system of education and training. The system was going to bring education and training together and this meant that a curriculum framework for a given programme was going to allow time for education and time for training within that single programme. The out-going Departments of Manpower and Education wanted a tracked system with linkages between them. As a result of compromise and negotiations, The NTSI document used a different terminology. The vision statement in the NTSI document talked of:

A human resources development system in which there is an integrated approach to education and training and which meets the economic and social needs of the country and the development needs of the individual. The term integrated approach indicates a super-ordinate strategy dealing with education and training as a whole which does not, however, impinge on the potential of dealing with each sub-system in a unique tactical manner (NTB 1994: 6).

What is emerging here is a shift from an integrated system of education and training to the notion of an integrated approach to education and training. One of my interviewees indicated that the term 'integrated approach' was suggested by business and according to this proposal, education and training were going to be two separate but interrelated systems linked by a qualification framework. The business community was in favour of integration primarily because they were of the opinion that the schooling system was not producing individuals useful to industry.

We can see that a much looser vision of integration than the earlier COSATU/ANC formulations, had been agreed to and adopted in the NTB (1994) report.

The model of a proposed qualifications framework that could provide the integration force for education and training is emerging in this document. This national qualifications framework 'will be based on a system of credits for learning

outcomes²⁷ achieved' (NTB 1994: 92). As we have seen from earlier ANC/COSATU proposals, learners would achieve a qualification by accumulating credit 'on an agreed cluster of learning outcomes defined according to national standards at a particular level' (ibid.). The system of credits was also introduced in de Lange in 1981. It was assumed that such a framework would allow articulation between the previously divided education and training systems. Such a credit-based framework would facilitate access to and progression through the education and training system.

The proposed model would allow the coherence and articulation across education and training using an eight level framework plus three sub-levels for ABE. There would be a General Certificate of Education (Level 1 plus ABE); National and Higher National Certificates (levels 2 to 4) and National Diplomas and Degrees (Level 5 to 8) (ibid. 93, 97). Reflecting the ANC/COSATU joint framework influence, the focus of this document was mainly on levels 2 to 4. 'The National Training Strategy concentrates on the penultimate sub-system, with occasional tangential comments on the tertiary sub-system' (ibid. 6). This seemed to suggest that universities were not fully part of this formulation of a credit-based qualifications framework although the document later proposed that such a qualifications framework would apply to all qualifications (ibid. 94).

The document proposed that all qualifications in the framework would have two elements, namely:

Units of learning (called units) defined in terms of learning outcomes and modules of learning (called modules) describing the length, the form or mode of delivery (ibid. 95).

The document proposed the key characteristics of a Unit of Learning as follows:

Units would be assigned a credit value at different levels based on agreed nominal learning time according to a common system; registered units would have the same credit value regardless of which provider is used to access them; a qualification would consist of a number of credits achieved through agreed clusters of units at specific levels. However units should be sufficiently self contained so that learners can take a

²⁷ A learning outcome has been defined in this document as a capability developed in the learner reflecting an integration of knowledge and skill which can be understood, applied and transferred to different contexts (ibid.). In other words it is a statement of outcome to be achieved by the learner.

module and be assessed for unit without necessarily completing all the units required for a qualification provided any specified prerequisites are met; units of learning are clearly distinguished from modules for the delivery of learning (ibid. 96).

A module would be formed by a combination of Units of Learning, plus core and optional units and total credits that could be earned (ibid. 99). The document recommended that these defined concepts of units and modules of learning be used as a basis for further discussion and development and that detailed guidelines should be developed to enable the implementation of the framework. This task was mandated to the SAQA (ibid.110-112).

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that the need to link academic education and vocational training has been on the South African agenda since the early 1980s. Although South Africa was isolated from the rest of the international community because of its apartheid policies, some of its reform proposals were influenced by experiences of other countries, such as Britain and Australia. References to some of these countries were reflected in South African documents. The agenda for reform was to solve problems that were affecting the South African economy. Integration was used in a very loose manner in the reforms proposed by the outgoing White government. Education and training were to remain in separate tracks, but linked with a qualifications structure.

When it was certain that political change was underway, ANC, COSATU and their social partners were advocating a complete restructuring of the apartheid education and training system. As we have seen, their thinking was influenced by a particular reading of post-Fordism that had a very limited impact on the South African mode of production. Their vision of integration was one that was going to do away with all the inequalities and imbalances that were created by apartheid. We have seen that the need for the linkages was already proposed in earlier reforms by the former government. The democratic movement picked those ideas, amplified them by adding social justice to them and proposed the integration of education and training

in a very strong way. The chapter has also shown that the same countries that influenced the former government's reforms also influenced the democratic movement.

The idea of an integrated system of education and training was resisted in the National Training Strategy Initiative in April 1994. This consensus report recommended for an integrated approach to education and training, meaning that education and training would be interrelated but distinct. In the next chapter, we will see how the first democratic government responded to the proposal of integrating education and training.

Chapter 7: The Post-Election Developments in Education and Training (May 1994- 1999).

Introduction

In the previous chapters we have seen how the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa originated as an outcome of a process that emerged in debates involving government, unionists and business from the early 1980s and early 1990s. This chapter focuses on the two years of the Government of National Unity (GNU)'s existence, from May 1994 to May 1996, when the NQF initiative was legislated. The processes that culminated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995 (RSA 1995) are examined. These processes include the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG) to steer the preparation of the legislation for the National Qualifications Framework and the development of the White Paper on Education and Training (WP) (DoE 1995).

The chapter will show that in spite of clear recommendations to establish a single department of education and training, this did not happen. Two departments, one for Education and one for Labour (with a training function) were established, and two Ministers were appointed. This arrangement, as we shall see later, favoured an integrated approach to education and training rather than an integrated system. We shall see later that SAQA chose to develop an integrated qualifications framework for reasons that are not all together clear.

Even though the policy development process drew on the momentum and much of the early conceptualisation that took place, some ideas were changed, some disappeared and others were carried forward. Building on the previous chapters, this chapter will set the scene for the development of the National Qualifications Framework by SAQA

These issues will be explored drawing from key official and public documents published during this period. These were *The White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE 1995), *The South African Qualifications Authority Act* (RSA 1995) and the *Report of the Ministerial Committee for Development Work on the NQF* (DoE 1996).

The chapter will also make use of one other official document, though not published. This comes from an *Inter-Ministerial Working Group* established by the ministers of education and Labour to develop the NQF Bill, which became the SAQA Act, promulgated in October 1995.

Use will also be made of the HSRC's *Ways of Seeing the National Qualifications Framework* (HSRC 1995). Even though this was an 'informal initiative of a group of concerned specialists and practitioners in education and training' (le Roux and Coombe 1995) and not a government commissioned document, its contribution is regarded as highly significant in understanding 'how a National Qualifications framework should be designed' (ibid.). It is also important to analyse this document because it gives us an insight into the labour/SAQA perspective of the NQF as this document grew out of the work of the NTSI (1994). We will see later how the education perspective of the NQF unfolded. One of the authors of *Ways of Seeing the National Qualifications Framework*, Sam Isaacs, later became the Chief Executive of the SAQA.

The evidence from documentary analysis will be triangulated with interview data drawn from key informants. Ten of these were authors of the above-mentioned documents, five were South African academics and commentators and two international experts.

Structure of the Chapter

The first section of the chapter will delineate the dynamics of the state apparatus in the Government of National Unity (GNU). This analysis will help us understand why the NQF took the trajectory it did. It will give some background to the establishment of an Inter-ministerial Working Group and the production of the White Paper on Education and Training.

The next section will follow the debates on the integration of education and training as reflected in the documents highlighted above. Particular attention will be given to the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE 1995), as this was an official government policy document.

The Government of National Unity (GNU)

In April 1994, the ANC was installed as the dominant partner in the Government of National Unity (GNU). This meant that the ANC and the previous National Party (NP) government shared governing responsibilities based on the negotiations agreed on an interim Constitution that 'would redefine, but also preserve much of the existing arrangements' (interview with Trevor Coombe, 4/08/04). To construct government, President Mandela had to take account of the interim constitution. That required a form of representation by different parties depending on the election results. That of course introduced a number of complications into the way in which portfolios²⁸ were constructed and distributed among different parties participating in the GNU.

According to one of my respondents, the calculation with respect to portfolios and how the ministries were going to be divided was not an easy matter, being the first democratic government and President Mandela himself had not been in government before and neither had the ANC representatives. Trevor Coombe, one of the key

players in the debates of integration of education and training, expressed his expectations as follows:

From the Education side we had very much hoped of course that the position that was adopted by the ANC for Education and Training to be under one ministry was going to be respected in the composition of the new government. In fact it was not only an ANC position, but a COSATU position, a mass democratic movement position and it was also reflected in the RDP base document of 1994. President Mandela made his decision on his new cabinet and Ministers of course only knew of their appointments when the President invited them to join his government, and at that stage the portfolios had been decided upon. The two ministers accepted the appointments in Mandela's cabinet with particular portfolio responsibilities. It happened that the Acts that the first democratic cabinet inherited were all apartheid regime Acts. Minister Bengu (Education) inherited apartheid laws which he was responsible for administering until they were changed. Minister Mboweni (Labour) inherited apartheid laws. Among the laws Minister Mboweni inherited was the Manpower Act, which included the training function (Coombe, 02/09/04)

It is important to note that the first Minister of Labour, Tito Mboweni, adopted the National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI) (NTB 1994) Report as policy in his first Five Year Plan of Action, 1994-1998 (PC 01, 13/08/04).

It was clear from President Mandela's government and the portfolio responsibilities that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) position, and the ANC/COSATU position of having a single department of education and training had not been reflected in the structure of the cabinet. What we see happening was the decision to keep the training function in the Department of Labour. According to respondents from the two departments, the decision was taken for strategic reasons having to do with the establishment of the government of the GNU. Two departments meant two Ministers, two Deputy Ministers and more officials and meant wider representation from interested parties.

²⁸ This refers to the legislative Act for which a ministry is responsible

The Inter-Ministerial Working Group

I will briefly explain the background in which the IMWG was established. Even though it was clear from the structure of the GNU that Education and Training were going to be separate ministries, the Strategic Management Team in the DoE, continued discussions in the light of the policies of the Democratic Movement to bring education and training together. The Minister of Education was advised to contact his colleague, the Minister of Labour in order to discuss the situation. A meeting was held in the DoE between the two Ministers and their Strategic Management Teams in June 1994. It was agreed to set up an Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG). Membership of the IMWG was drawn from both governments as well as employer and trade union representatives linked to the NTB initiative, with additional representatives from the teacher trade unions. That was the origin of the IMWG. According to one of my respondents, it had two responsibilities:

- to look into how the training portfolio could be brought over to Education in order to meet the policy of the Mass Democratic Movement
- to consider together how to push forward an NQF (PC 28, 5/11/04)

The IMWG worked in detail on both of those assignments. It was pointed out during some interviews that the attempt to bring the training portfolio to education was not any easy task. It was going to involve officials, assets and the NTB from the Department of Labour to move to the Department of Education. According to respondents, an advanced stage was reached on that discussion of bringing the training portfolio into education, but the initiative suffered a major setback. One of my respondents summarised how the initiative failed to progress as follows:

At a certain meeting of the IMWG, the colleagues from the DoL came with a new mandate from their Minister. The new mandate was to suspend all discussion on the transfer of the training function. The reason given was that the Minister of Labour had set up a policy process for his ministry to develop what is called an active labour market strategy. He had been advised that he should not forfeit his training responsibilities before that labour market strategy policy has been fully worked through. He stopped the

involvement of Labour from that initiative. This is how it ended because it was never resumed (Coombe, 02/09/04).

From the above discussion it can be seen that the Minister of Labour decided to retain the training portfolio and ultimately the Skills Development Act was developed in the DoL and SETAs were set up. This meant that there was an entirely different system in government than was anticipated prior to government and the implications of that had to be worked out. Undoubtedly, that did have an effect on how the White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) was finally phrased. For example, the WPET states:

The Ministry of Education recognises the Ministry of Labour's essential interest in its active labour market policy, of which the promotion of skills development outside the formal provisioning system of education and training is an integral part (DoE 1995: 16)

The White Paper on Education and Training

It was recognised in the Department of Education that one of the obligations was to lay down a policy process in government, which was going to be a different exercise from the process prior to majority rule government. One of my respondents commented on this:

Of course the policy process in government would draw on the momentum and on much of the conceptualisation that took place prior to government. Although the Yellow Book was an important instituted document in being the first fully authoritative and comprehensive statement anticipating government, it could not substitute for a document prepared within the government itself and approved by the cabinet of the GNU, the two processes were distinctively different. The Yellow Book process was undertaken at the time when the process of constitutional negotiations was still going on. Much of the work in the Yellow Book was undertaken before we knew even how the structures of government were going to be (Coombe, 02/09/04).

From the above comment, it is clear that a lot had to be re-thought in the context of government and indeed in relation to the dynamics of the GNU. In the Ministry of Education was Minister Bengu who was ANC and the Deputy Minister was Schoeman (not ANC), who was an MP nominated by President Mandela to represent the interests of the minority party in government. Mr Schoeman liaised closely with

the officials from the former White government and with the structures in education associated with the National Party.

Because the Interim Constitution required the cabinet to work on the basis of sufficient consensus, Minister Bengu had to negotiate at all times with respect to his policy positions. One of my respondents commented like this

The basis of sufficient consensus was not an empty concept, the Interim Constitution required the majority party to negotiate its policy positions with the minority parties and as far as possible to win its position by persuasion, but where it could not do so, then it would make principled compromises (Bird, 18/10/04).

In brief, that was the dynamic in which the White Paper on Education and Training was being prepared. On one hand they had to engage the comrades in the Democratic Movement and on the other hand deal with NP's associated lobby that had their bottom line view that had to be accommodated. According to Trevor Coombe, one of the authors of the WPET, every word and phrase in the WPET was negotiated in the different constituencies and a position was reached that was generally acceptable across the board.

As far as the NQF component in the White Paper was concerned, Coombe described the process as follows:

The NQF component in the WP grew out of the work of the IMWG. I was chair of the IMWG and co-ordinator of the working group of the WP, so I took the draft text of the NQF to the working group of the WP where it was discussed and no doubt some amendments were made and the text was approved. There was a connection between the process of developing the NQF bill, which became the SAQA Act and the development of the WP (Coombe 02/09/04).

Having delineated the background in which the WPET and the IMWG were developed, it becomes important and interesting to explore in more detail how the notion of integration and an NQF have been negotiated in these consensus documents.

Integration of education and training

We have seen from the previous discussions that the debates on integration of education and training were shaped by both local and global imperatives.

Building on early debates, both the IMWG and the WPET clearly articulated their proposals for integration in an international dimension. The IMWG suggests:

There is a world-wide shift towards an integrated approach to education and training which has been compelled by the need for labour market mobility, the learning requirements of advanced technology and new forms of work organisation. A unique opportunity exists in this country to leapfrog stages of development and to implement integration which other countries may be less able to implement comprehensively because of the weight of tradition and the lack of political climate (IMWG 1994: 3)

In the same vein, the WP argues:

Successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies, in social organisation, in the organisation of curricula and the distribution of educational opportunity in many countries of the world, including South Africa. They require citizens with a strong foundation of general education, the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new knowledge, skills and technologies, to move flexibly between occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards, and to work co-operatively. In response to such structural changes in social and economic organisation and technological development, integrated approaches toward education and training are now a major international trend in curriculum development and the reform of qualifications structures. The Ministry of Education is convinced that this approach is a prerequisite for successful human resource development, and it is thus capable of making a significant contribution to the reconstruction and development of our society (DoE 1995: 15).

While the WP clearly positions its proposals for integration in a global context, it also refers to the emergence of a local consensus for linking education and training for a post-apartheid South Africa. These proposals were also set out by the ANC/COSATU alliance, by the NTB and by the former Department of National Education (DNE). In developing these policy proposals, these key players were drawing from experience of other countries through visits, literature and the use of international and local experts. The WPET to an extent draws from the proposals made by these constituencies.

In relation to local pressures, we have seen that the Mass Democratic Movement and the ANC/COSATU alliance were concerned about the legacy of the apartheid education and training system and its failure to address the socio-economic and political demands of the majority. The democratic movement envisaged a new integrated education and training system, based on a qualifications framework and an outcomes based approach to curriculum and learning. It was argued that this would improve access, participation and the quality of learning. The rationale for integration was expressed in relation to the politics of injustice and inequity (Christie 1997; Unterhalter 1998). It was seen as a means of redressing past imbalances of apartheid. In that sense they advocated for an integrated education and training system and the creation of a single ministry for that purpose. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) base document (ANC1994b) expressed it in the following way:

We must develop an integrated system of education and training that provides equal opportunities to all... The education and training bureaucracy must be reorganised at national, sectoral and provincial levels through the establishment of a single national ministry (ANC 1994b: 60).

However, instead of the envisaged single department prior to elections, South Africa had training separated from education. As we have seen from the previous section this departure from pre-election thinking should be understood in relation to the political compromise (between the NP and the ANC) of the Interim Constitution. As a result, the WP on Education and Training replaced the concept of an integrated system by the idea of an 'integrated approach' to education and training.

Education and training are each essential elements of human resource development. Rather than viewing them as parallel activities, the Ministry of Education believes that they are in fact closely related. In order to maximise the benefits of this relationship, the Ministry is committed to an integrated approach to education and training, and sees this as a vital underlying concept for a national human resource development strategy. (Department of Education 1995: 15)

The integrated approach that the WP on Education and Training advocates

implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between 'academic' and 'applied', 'theory' and 'practice', 'knowledge' and 'skills', 'head' and 'hand'. Such divisions have grown out of, and helped to reproduce, very old occupational and social class distinctions. (ibid: 15).

The use of the terms "integrated system" and "integrated approach" need clarification. An integrated system would require working on education and training policy, strategy and planning within one ministry. An integrated approach, however, is attempting to work across ministries and to co-ordinate the activities of two different ministries. Different in the sense that there will be two separate bureaucratic structures, two channels of advice both political and professional flowing to the ministers, there will be two Ministers making separate decisions, taking separate submissions to the cabinet and so on. As argued in the WP:

In promoting an integrated approach to education and training under the NQF, the Ministry of Education does not wish to assume executive responsibility for the provision of training which falls within the competence of other Ministries (ibid. 15).

In particular the dynamics of the consultative system relating to training or skills development became very different from the consultative system relating to formal education for which the Minister of Education is responsible. This dynamic was expressed by one of the respondents from the DoL as follows:

In the case of skills development, the consultative process grew out of the NTST process, the Industrial training Board, labour and organised business compromising their positions and so on. The call of that consultative process is labour market oriented. It is legitimated within the labour market. The players are labour market players (PC 21, 01/11/04).

One respondent from the DoE had this to say:

Education has an entirely different consultative process, with different players on board to the extent that where organised labour and organised business are involved in consultation on formal education, they are not central players, they are coming from the perspective of their own interests. Central players in education consultations are the education players, education unions, employers in the provincial departments in our system, the independent schools, schools governing bodies, these are the organised constituencies who take part in the education conversations. The nature of the work that has been done by the two departments was different. There is difference in spirit or ethics involved in policy making and these differences are particularly difficult to breach. This is why we were hoping that there would be a combined ministry of

education and training. It was to enable the perspectives and interests of the formal education system to impact and inform skills development and vice versa. It is that more difficult to do when the two functions are separated (PC 14, 29/10/04).

It is now clear that it was difficult for the WPET to endorse the integration of education and training when the structures of delivery of education and training were in fact being arranged under different portfolios.

According to one of my respondents, 'the phrase an integrated approach was coined in order to keep the concept alive (PC 14, 29/10/04). This meant that the phrase "an integrated approach" in the WPET could be seen as a symbolic phrase designed to signal progress as opposed to effecting real change on the ground.

This theme of education policy as symbolism has been developed by South African commentators, including Fine (1994); de Clercq (1997); Fataar (1999) and Jansen (2002). Commenting on the WP, de Clercq (1997) echoed that it was a symbolic policy document designed to

reassure all stakeholders with uncontroversial educational principles and values as broad and general symbolic regulatory policy frameworks (p. 135)

The section that follows will briefly discuss how the WP conceptualised the National Qualifications Framework.

A National Qualifications Framework

The WP locates the development of the NQF concept in the deliberations initiated by the NTSI in April 1994.

Through the National Training Board's National Training Strategy Initiative, a large number of organised constituencies have already participated in the development of the NQF concept. Organised business and organised labour have been leading actors in undertaking the conceptualisation (DoE 1995: 26)

Although labour was leading the conceptualisation process, the educational sector was involved in the early conceptualisation of the NQF as well. This thesis locates

the roots of the NQF in de Lange, which was an education initiative. After 1990, Adrienne Bird representing trade unions became very active, but there was also Trevor Coombe, who was representing the ANC education department in the early conceptualisation of the NQF.

The WPET keeps the tone of previous debates in relation to the conceptualisation of the NQF. It consolidates the government's commitment to the idea of an integrated approach and tries to describe its forward thinking on the nature of the NQF.

An integrated approach to education and training will link one level of learning to another and enable successful learners to progress to higher levels without restriction from any starting point in the education and training system. Learning and skills which people have acquired through experience and on-site training or self education could be formally assessed and credited towards certificates, in order to qualify for entry to additional education or training (DoE 1995: 26).

The WPET goes on to view the NQF as a regulatory mechanism able to break down the apartheid walls of division and achieve parity of esteem of education and training even though the bureaucratic separation of education and training responsibilities would continue. It states that:

The draft National Qualification Framework Bill being prepared by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group will therefore allow ample scope for the NQF to be developed from within the diverse education and training sectors, in terms of national guidelines and a mutually agreed regulatory framework. The National Qualification Framework is envisaged as being developed and implemented on an inter-departmental basis, with fully consultative processes of decision making (ibid. 16)

It was anticipated that these 'fully consultative processes' would help to bring education and training together since the NQF would enable different providers in both education and training to assist in formulating and registering national standards in their respective fields (DoE 1996).

As indicated earlier on, the work on the NQF concept was immense and was carried forward by the IMWG, which represented many of the main interested groups. The IMWG sponsored the NQF bill, which became the SAQA Act, promulgated on 4 October 1995 (RSA 1995). As can be seen from the IMWG membership, the groups

came from different backgrounds and so approached the policy initiative from their own perspectives. One of my respondents described the different reactions as follows:

The initiative was received with mixed reactions. Some were concerned with promoting equity and redress, some to promote economic competitiveness and productivity and some were concerned with promoting quality in learning (PC 28, 5/11/04)

While business and labour placed the economy at the centre of the NQF, Young (1996) noted that for the new South African government, it is not only the economic role of national qualifications frameworks that may be central but also their social and political role in overcoming the multiple divisions of apartheid education and training systems. However, it is not certain whether the NQF would be able to achieve this.

Although Coombe argued that the main interested parties supported the bill and that all parties in Parliament supported it and it passed without dissent, the only sector from which serious resistance emerged on the NQF concept was the Committee of University Principals (CUP). The higher education sector had not been represented on the IMWG (no doubt an omission). The CUP feared that the establishment of an NQF and a new statutory body to oversee it (SAQA) would take away the universities' right to determine their own curricula. This concern was addressed by inserting Section 5(2) (b) in the Bill to ensure that universities and technikons under their own Acts were protected:

5.

(2) The Authority shall pursue the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework as provided in section 2 and execute the functions of the Authority as provided in subsection (1)-

a) after consultation and in co-operation with the departments of state, statutory bodies, companies, bodies and institutions responsible for education, training and the certification of standards which will be affected by the National Qualifications Framework;

b) with due regard for the respective competence of Parliament and the provincial legislatures in terms of section 126 of the Constitution, and the rights, powers and functions of the governing bodies of a university or universities and a technikon or technikons as provided in an Act of Parliament (RSA 1995: 7)

Resistance from universities has been experienced in other countries where similar frameworks have been instituted. Gevers (1999) argues that universities' reservations with regards to the NQF are based on three issues:

- The perception that the NQF originates from the labour movement and is aimed at improving human resource development. Higher education, therefore, fears a possible drift towards vocationalism and undesirable standardisation arising from the application of prescriptive framework requirements.
- There are fears that rigid frameworks could have a negative impact on the necessary diversity of higher education programmes.
- There is a concern that the characteristics of the proposed frameworks, which emphasise outcomes are overly reductionist and behaviourist and general anti-ethical to the goals and ethos of universities in particular (p. 10).

However, despite these differing perspectives, the main interested parties realised that the purpose of the NQF was to bring about transformation, to effect a fundamental restructuring of the apartheid education and training system. Thus, the objectives of the NQF as laid down in the Act are to:

- Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- Enhance the quality of education and training;
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large (RSA 1995: 2-3)

An analysis of the way these objectives were phrased shows that a consensus has been reached and the priorities of the groups from diverse backgrounds have been reflected. As can be observed, the framing of these objectives reflects some continuity with some concerns which were raised in the debates prior to 1994. In the previous chapter, we have seen that different groups who were advocating for integration were doing so from their own perspectives and motivation. There were

both advocates for economic rationality and for social justice and all these concerns were reflected in the objectives of the NQF.

The theme running through many of the participants interviewed was that although the objectives of the NQF were accepted across the board, there were some varied responses as to whether the framework could actually achieve those things. One of them expressed her views as follows:

It is only a framework, an enabling framework. Whether it can achieve quality and whether it can do all that depends on what happens within it. No framework can guarantee any of those things. All it can do is set the terrain on which the game can be played and the quality of the game depends on the players and the time. The most it can achieve is the equivalency that enables the movement of the learners (PC 07/10/04).

Christie (1997) also expressed this argument as follows:

An NQF as policy can only enable aims; it cannot deliver them. I think it is a mistake when people talk about how quality will be achieved through an NQF. It is only one of the several instruments that will help to do that. It is a framework which enables other work to take place. Quality is achieved at the actual site of delivery (p. 88).

Young (1994) echoed the same view:

It is the human resources (teachers/educators) and its institutions (schools, colleges, community centres, its distance learning provision, its media and cultural organisations) that will deliver the improvement (p.3).

This is what Raffe (2003) referred to as policy breadth²⁹, the extent to which the framework is linked to corresponding institutional reforms. Drawing on the concept, it can be commented that the NQF may not achieve those goals if it is not supplemented by reforms on the actual site of delivery, for example, teaching and learning strategies.

When compared with other frameworks we have discussed in Chapter 3, for example the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, it can be seen that the NQF in

²⁹ See also the concepts of intrinsic and institutional logics (Raffe 1988, Raffe et al. 1994)

South Africa has been established with very ambitious objectives. Although it is understood from the circumstances in which the NQF was being established, it has indeed placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF and SAQA. However, in spite of all these difficulties there is considerable evidence of successes, as the NQF Impact Study has shown (SAQA 2005).

The section that follows focuses on how SAQA attempted to meet its agenda of developing the NQF. These processes included putting the NQF structures in place, the conceptualisation and the roles and remits of different steering mechanisms.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework:

Overview

The background to the establishment of the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA Act 1995) has been provided earlier on in this chapter. The Ministers of Education and Labour are jointly responsible for this Act. The SAQA Act of 1995 established the legal basis for SAQA with overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF. SAQA is made up of a Board and staff complement. The Board consists of representatives from the Departments of Education and Labour, employer organisations, trade union federations and providers. The Board is responsible for overall policy advice to the Ministers whilst the staff complement is responsible for the development and implementation of policy. The functions of the Authority as stipulated in the Act are as follows:

5.
 - The Authority shall
 - (i) oversee the development of the national Qualifications Framework; and
 - (ii) formulate and publish policies and criteria for-
 - (a) the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications; and
 - (b) the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications;

- oversee the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, including-
- the registration or accreditation of bodies referred to in paragraph (a) and the assignment of functions to them;
- (ii) the registration of national standards and qualifications;
- (iii) steps to ensure compliance with provisions for accreditation; and
- (iv) steps to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable;
- advise the Minister on matters affecting the registration of standards and qualifications; and
- be responsible for the control of finances of the Authority (RSA 1995: 6-7)

We can see that the system outlined in the Act has three structural elements:

- The first one is the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), established to co-ordinate the system;
- The second are bodies accredited by SAQA to set the standards. These bodies are referred to as National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and one NSB would be established in each of the twelve organising fields highlighted above ; and
- The third are bodies accredited by SAQA to ensure that the standards set are in fact delivered. These bodies are referred to as Education and Training Qualification Authorities (ETQAs)

A fourth structural element was suggested in the report of the Ministerial Committee for development work on the NQF in February 1996. These are Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) responsible for setting standards for sub-fields. These bodies would be below NSBs (DoE 1996).

Apart from these functions, NSBs in consultation with SGBs would produce guidelines for level descriptors³⁰ (HSRC 1995; DoE 1996). SAQA would prescribe the level descriptors to ensure coherence across fields. What is emerging is that the NQF architecture put in place schematically by the SAQA Act was both centralised and decentralised. SAQA would write the rules and criteria, the NSBs would safeguard those rules and criteria insofar as standards and qualification development

³⁰ A level descriptor means the statement describing a particular level of the levels of the framework. It indicates a level of complexity in a cross-curricula way (DoE 1996: 38).

are concerned, but SGBs and ETQAs represent specific skill and knowledge and sectoral interests and requirements.

The second phase is characterised by the formulation of policies and criteria for the generation, evaluation and registration of standards and qualifications on the national qualifications framework. This also involved the development of criteria for the registration of NSBs, SGBs and ETQAs. During this phase, the structure of the NQF was developed and important decisions were made that were meant to drive the NQF forward. These processes are located in the period between 1996 and 1999.

It is also important to highlight that at every stage, SAQA had to negotiate its decisions with all affected parties and had to inform the ministers of Education and Labour of such decisions. As stipulated in the SAQA Act (1995), these decisions will have statutory force once published in the Government Gazette, and as we shall see later, this did not go well with other interested parties especially the university sector.

In the first year of its operation, SAQA made some important decisions (SAQA Bulletin 1997). Some of them were the adoption of an eight level framework made up of three bands; the adoption of twelve organising fields and the establishment of NSBs, SGBs and ETQAs. The section that follows will discuss each of these decisions in turn.

Levels of the NQF

Building on the proposals made in the White Paper (1995), SAQA made a decision to adopt an eight level framework with three bands represented in the diagram below:

NQF LEVEL	BAND	QUALIFICATION TYPE	
8	HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-doctoral research degrees• Doctorates• Masters degrees• Professional qualifications• Honours degrees• National first degrees• Higher diplomas• National diplomas• National certificates	
7			
6			
5			
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE			
4	FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING	National certificates	
3			
2			
GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE			
1	GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	Grade 9	ABET Level 4
		National certificates	

Table: The NQF's current structure.

An eight level framework was adopted with levels 1 and 8 being regarded as open ended (SAQA Bulletin 1997) to allow SAQA to register unit standards above and below the eight levels. We have seen in chapter three that Australia's National Training Board proposed an eight levels framework and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) started with an eight level framework and moved to ten. We will see in chapter eight that South Africa has considered moving from eight levels to ten, indicating some overseas influences.

The proposed open ended eight level framework means that there is no fixed entry point into Level 1 nor a fixed exit point out of level 8, thus consolidating the notion of lifelong learning. If the band is Higher Education and Training (HET), then the

level can only be 5, 6, 7 and 8; if the Band is Further Education and Training (FET), the level can only be 2, 3 and 4. And if the Band is General Education and Training (GET), the level can only be 1. Some kind of symmetry is reflected in the framework above, where there are four levels for pre-higher education and four levels for higher education. Squeezing the higher education levels into four has been highly challenged by the university sector that wants six levels for higher education. Some commentators within South Africa attribute these higher education concerns to elitism, higher education wanting to rule again. Yet there are certain realities that are attached to the argument and this will be dealt with later in this chapter. It should be understood that qualifications can span two or more levels and depending on the complexities of the learning involved, a first degree might be registered at level 5, 6, or 7; for instance a formative bachelor's degree might be registered at level 5 and an MBChB at level 7 (Cosser 1989).

Cosser (ibid: 8-9) made an attempt to describe the levels of the NQF in the higher education band drawing on UNESCO findings that most higher education systems appear to be divided into three phases.

Phase 1: Training in the fundamental disciplines of one field of study. This phase matches level 5 on the NQF.

Phase 2: Greater specialisation in one or several fundamental or applied disciplines usually allied to an introduction to research and the analysis of complex problems. Level 6 on the NQF matches this phase.

Phase 3: Advanced study and original research, which may be carried out individually or in a team. This phase matches level 8 on the NQF.

SAQA argued that there is an intermediate phase between phase 2 and 3, which focuses on the 'development of well developed research skills' (ibid. 9) appropriate to the field of study and has been matched with level 7 of the NQF. From the above

analysis of NQF levels it can be observed that it is the development of research skills that differentiate level 6 from level 5. However, the table does not show where types of higher education qualifications fit at each of the levels 5-8.

Organising fields of the NQF

In addition to providing an eight level framework, the NQF divides education and training into twelve organising fields as follows (RSA 1998a: 3):

Field 01: Agriculture and Nature Conservation

Field 02: Culture and Arts

Field 03: Business, Commerce and Management Studies

Field 04: Communication Studies and Language

Field 05: Education, Training and Development

Field 06: Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology

Field 07: Human and Social Studies

Field 08: Law, Military Science and Security

Field 09: Health Sciences and Social Services

Field 10: Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences

Field 11: Services

Field 12: Physical Planning and Construction

These fields are for ease of management and are not based on subject areas or traditional disciplines, nor are they based on economic sectors. Instead these organising fields are based on the integration of fundamental disciplines and areas of study, and on the identification of key occupational clusters. These fields are the basis for the development of unit standards and qualifications that are registered on the NQF. SAQA realised that there were overlaps between fields and that these fields were constantly shifting (SAQA Bulletin 1997). Thus new fields were created over time in order to give some coherence to the organisation of unit standards and qualifications. Kraak and Mahomed (2001) argued that fields should not be seen as rigid categories onto which real-life practice is prized. It is important to note that

there is no sharp distinction between technical and vocational training on the one hand and general education on the other. The framework embraces both.

For each learning field, SAQA has established one National Standards Body (NSB) to oversee its work. The membership of NSBs embraces a basic tenet that

knowledge, relevant for the current world, is created through partnership between and amongst varied groupings in society, from academics and researchers to business; from workers to professional experts; from government to community organisations; and from learners to professors- in other words- knowledge creation is no longer the preserve of narrowly-defined groups of "experts" (Isaacs & Nkomo 2003: 82).

NSBs reflect a new way, which requires that their governance should be based on stakeholder participation. Each NSB must comprise representatives from each of the six national stakeholder groups/categories of organisations, which are:

- state departments (especially the Departments of Education and Labour, and where desirable other state departments, representatives of the provinces and of schools)
- organised business
- organised labour
- education and training providers (representatives of the GET, FET and HET bands)
- critical interests groups (such as professional bodies, professional institutes and examining bodies)
- community/learner organisations (RSA 1998a)

The allocated membership for each national stakeholder group is normally six and the total number of representatives of each NSB is 36, but groups may have more if SAQA approves. The NSBs are responsible for a number of functions:

- defining and recommending to SAQA the boundaries of the field for which it is constituted and, within this, a framework of sub-fields

- recognising or establishing SGBs in sub-fields, and ensuring that the work of SGBs meets the requirements of SAQA
- recommending the registration of standards and qualification on the NQF to SAQA
- proposing criteria and mechanisms for the moderation of standards and qualifications
- overseeing the update and reviewing of qualifications; and
- liaising with ETQAs on procedures for recommending new standards and qualifications (ibid.)

From the above functions, it is clear that NSBs will not generate standards and qualifications themselves. They will oversee these activities at sub-field level. Standards and qualifications are actually generated by Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs).

Each NSB may recognise existing bodies as SGBs or establish new ones in its own defined field. In making an application for registration as a Standards Generating Body the applicant meets the SGB criteria as stipulated in regulation 20 (3) (ibid. 7). Membership of SGBs comprises experts from key education and training stakeholder interest groups in the sub-field with due regard to representativity and equity. Members appointed per each SGB may not exceed 25³¹ unless deemed otherwise by the Authority, although there is no intrinsic logic why they should not exceed twenty-five. The functions of SGBs are to:

- generate standards and qualifications according to SAQA regulations
- update and review standards to the NSB and SAQA
- recommend standards and qualifications to NSBs for evaluation
- recommend criteria for the registration of assessors and moderators and moderating bodies (ibid.).

³¹ For example, the SGB for Educators for Schooling consists of 12 representatives of Universities and Technikons (faculties and school of education), 6 representatives of Colleges of Education, 1 from the South African Council of Educators, 3 from professional teacher organisation, and 2 from the Department of Education (Morrow 2001).

We have seen that SAQA established one NSB (drawn from stakeholders in the education and training system) for each of the 12 learning fields; Each NSB designates the official sub-fields and NSBs establish SGBs for each sub-field to write unit standards and to propose qualifications.

The original design of the NQF was based on a unit standard methodology in which a large number of unit standards would be registered across the 12 learning areas, each standing alone and being quality assured at a unit level. It should be understood that qualifications created by a combination of registered unit standards, would not be quality assured at a 'whole' level. Some units may be taken from other learning fields to fulfil the requirements of a particular qualification.

The unit standard methodology adopted by SAQA was meant to achieve both standardisation and integration in the entire qualifications system. This arrangement would allow unit equivalency to be achieved, credit transfer possible and learner flexibility and progression maximised.

According to Gevers (1998), the NQF requires that unit standards (nationally standardised small units of learning) are agreed upon by all interested parties in the education and training system. Learners may study a number of units at a convenient pace and then accumulate credit over time. These units can be drawn from different learning sites, which are used in various rules of combination to form nationally standardised qualifications.

As we shall see later, the university community expressed a lot of reservations and pointed out two limitations of the original model of the NQF. It was argued that the NQF would inhibit qualification diversity by giving emphasis on standardisation and integration. Secondly, it was feared that the unit standard methodology would lead to fragmentation and incoherent learning experience for students in higher education provision. Another fear was that learners would end up compiling credits on the basis

of ease and proximity rather than on the basis of the vertical coherence required by advanced training in the disciplines.

SAQA responded to these criticisms (ibid.) and agreed to a hybrid framework, where both unit standards and whole qualifications can be registered. Qualifications not based on unit standards will have specified exit level outcomes and integrative formative and summative assessment of the whole qualification. In theory, it means that the framework can have more than one qualification of a particular kind. However, this compromise brought further tensions and dilemmas. The central argument put forward against the hybrid model was that integration will be difficult to achieve, with the NQF opening itself to such a level of diversity by allowing whole qualifications to be registered on the NQF.

One of my respondents commented like this:

The more comprehensive³² the NQF becomes by the inclusion of qualifications with diverse components and assessment methodologies, the less it can be said to be integrated (PC 15, 27/08/04).

A more detailed analysis of these debates will follow in the next chapter.

Interim registration of existing qualifications

In June 1998, two years after its formation, SAQA started the process of recording all existing qualifications for interim registration, which means that qualifications submitted for 'recording' before 30 June 1998 and resubmitted before 30 June 2000 in the prescribed NQF-aligned format (outcomes-based) issued on 28 March 1998, would have registration status until 30 June 2003. In accordance with the NSB regulations (1998), whole qualifications or unit standards must be NQF-aligned. That is to say both formats must have purpose statements, specify learning outcomes (both specific and critical cross-field), and an integration of both formative and summative assessment, and both must show that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is

provided for in their descriptions. Both formats must also have articulation possibilities, international comparability and moderation options (see Appendices for details).

Looking beyond mid-2003, SAQA started the process of establishing large numbers of SGBs to be in operation in the Higher Education Band, with many overlaps between the interim-registered qualifications and the new ones to be generated by SGBs (Gevers 2001). As we shall see later, this has created some of the problems in the implementation of the NQF in terms of duplication of functions.

Education and training providers in the three bands of the NQF participated and 8858 submissions were received by SAQA for interim registration. By 30 June 2000 a total of 6808 qualifications were accepted on the Register of Existing Qualifications and 5324 of these interim-registered qualifications were on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) (SAQA 2000-2001). SAQA made a decision in 2002 (SAQA decision number 1043/02) that interim registered qualifications are to be fully registered, and that such registration is valid until June 2006. From June 2006, all registered qualifications on the framework must comply fully with outcomes-based principles.

The sectors comprising the HET and GET bands of the NQF launched some initiatives in an attempt to register qualifications on the NQF. These initiatives are briefly explained below.

Higher Education sector

Early in 2001 (Gevers 2001), the HET sector launched the Generic Qualifications Standards Setting Project (GQSS-P) to generate standards for five generic Bachelor level qualifications within the university sector- the BA, BSc, Bcom, BSc (Eng) and LLB degrees- and the BTech degree within the technikon sector. In the first phase of

³² Comprehensive here is used differently from the way Young and Raffé used it to refer to a framework that includes all qualifications offered in a country.

this initiative (February 2001-June 2002), five SGBs were registered for the production of the above mentioned five generic qualifications as a pilot process and 20:80 generic qualifications were targeted. This meant that they targeted 20 per cent of qualifications for which 80 percent of university students enrol.

The “New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education” (NAP) was proposed in January 2002 (DoE 2002) to provide academic planning framework to underpin this innovation. The “nested approach³³” to standard setting for higher education qualifications on the NQF was developed in the process and has been adopted in the NAP document and SAQA’s draft Level Descriptors document.

In the second and third phase of the GQSS-P initiative (August 2002-June 2003), the pilot process was extended to the remaining generic (and other designated) degrees at the Bachelor level and the generic and other designated degrees at Honours and Masters levels (Gevers 2002).

These developments show some commitment of the higher education sector to the NQF, even though they had their own reservations on the overall SAQA/NQF architecture.

General Education and Training

The *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education* (DoE 1996) provided for the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in the schooling system commonly known as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). This initiative was criticised (Jansen 1999a,b) for its arcane language, its complex formulation and the inaccessibility of this curriculum to teachers. A Review Team was set up and produced a detailed analysis of the problems of Curriculum 2005 and how it could be

³³ “The ‘nesting’ principle means that in setting standards for qualifications, the system moves logically from the most general to the most specific layers. With level descriptors and qualifications descriptors for the most general qualification types being in place first, these will guide standards setting for the generic designated variants of the basic qualifications types, and for their specialised versions. They will be ‘nested’ within each other and meet requirements cumulatively from outside in” (SAQA 2001/2002: 2)

improved (DoE 2000f). Following the recommendations of the Report of the Review Committee (ibid.), it was agreed that the Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R-9³⁴ should be revised in order to streamline and strengthen Curriculum 2005 (DoE 2001). A Ministerial Project Committee was established to prepare a “Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools)” (ibid.). Even though the Project Committee was not recognised as an SGB in terms of SAQA specifications, the team worked co-operatively with SAQA and observed the NQF registration requirements of the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) for compulsory schooling (DoE & DoL 2002). The revised statement proposed that the GETC for compulsory schooling would be registered as a whole school qualification rather than unit standards based curriculum and is based on the extent to which the learning outcomes are achieved through the Grade 9 assessment standards. The proposed qualification framework will be implemented for the first time in 2008 when the first cohort to have experienced this curriculum graduate from Grade 9 (DoE 2001).

This is diverting away from SAQA’s original design of the NQF. SAQA’s design of the NQF was based on a unit standard methodology. The purpose was to allow learners to pick units across the learning areas and accumulate credits in the process. Registering whole qualifications on the framework distorts the whole process. The NQF would simply be a register of qualifications and this was not the purpose of creating it.

Quality Assurance of Standards

Once a qualification is registered on the framework, it can be delivered by any accredited provider. A provider is accredited by a quality assurance agency, called an Education and Training Quality Assurance body or ETQA. ETQAs are not established by SAQA, but are accredited by SAQA. An Education and Training Assurance body is responsible for monitoring and auditing the level of achievement of national standards or qualifications offered by providers and to which specific functions have been assigned by SAQA.

³⁴ From pre-primary to the first two years of secondary education.

ETQAs are not organised by learning areas as with the case of NSBs, but rather recognised in one of the following areas:

An education and training sub-system sector (e.g. HET band, FET band and GET band)

An economic sector (e.g. Professional bodies and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs))

A social sector (there has been no identification of any potential ETQAs in this sector)

According to the Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 58 of 1995): ETQAs, Government Gazette No. 19231 (8 September 1998), an Education and Training Quality Assurance Body may apply to SAQA for accreditation provided that

- there is a need for an ETQA in the sector
- it has a primary focus for its quality assurance activities
- it will not duplicate the functions of other ETQAs, unless approved by SAQA
- it has the capacity, capability and resources to perform its functions
- it has a system of quality management in place
- its function of quality assurance is separate from and independent of provision of education and training
- national stakeholders are adequately represented in the decision making process (RSA 1998b)

Functions of ETQAs

The role of the ETQA is to:

- accredit providers
- promote quality among providers

- monitor and audit providers
- register assessors
- ensure and facilitate moderation among and across providers
- facilitate moderation across ETQAs
- take responsibility for the certification of learners
- recommend new qualifications and standards to NSBs for consideration (ibid.).

ETQAs do not set the standards, but rather quality assure the delivery and assessment of registered standards and qualifications. Further more an ETQA may not be a provider, but it quality assures the quality of provision and assessment of providers it has accredited. The debate is on whether the functions of standards setting and quality assurance should be the responsibility of one body or remain separate. This debate will be explored in chapter eight.

Context in which ETQAs operate

As seen above, ETQAs accredited by SAQA fall within two sectors, namely the Education and Training Sub-system sector and the Economic Sector.

Education and Training Sub-system Sector

ETQAs in this sector covers multi-purpose providers³⁵ in education and training such as private and public institutions. All providers, regardless of the sector in which they are active, can be accredited by only one ETQA. There is always a problem of overlaps and duplication of functions where a provider is offering programmes that fall outside the primary focus of a constituent ETQA. In order to manage the overlapping areas of interest, SAQA promoted the establishment of Memoranda of Understanding³⁶ (MoU) between ETQAs (Isaacs and Nkomo 2003). We will see later the difficulties experienced in the implementation of this approach.

³⁵ multi-purpose providers offer education and training that covers a wide range of fields without being focussed on a specific field.

³⁶ The MoU is an agreement that recognises and respects the powers and responsibilities of the ETQAs that are part of the agreement. This means that the assessment and moderation criteria used by

In this sector, there are two ETQAs, namely, the Council for Higher Education (CHE), through the Higher Education and Quality Committee (HEQB) that deals with all Higher Education institutions (private and public) and UMALUSI, General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council, responsible for all Private and Public General and Further Education Multi-purpose institutions.

In terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as amended by Higher Education Amendment Act 23 of 2001, section 7 (1A) provides that “the Higher Education Quality Committee is deemed to be accredited by SAQA as an ETQA primarily responsible for higher education”. Although it is a requirement that the CHE and HEQC comply with requirements as stipulated in the SAQA Act, 1995, technically it means they cannot make an application for accreditation to SAQA and cannot be de-accredited by SAQA.

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001, in terms of section 5 (1) also provides that UMALUSI “must be regarded as having been accredited by SAQA”.

This is a highly complex and problematic process. There are two key players in the NQF, the CHE and UMALUSI, who may not comply with SAQA regulations. This has created divisions in the system of quality assurance. On the one hand there are ETQAs that have to apply for accreditation and on the other those ‘deemed’ to be accredited by law. This means that CHE and UMALUSI cannot legally enter into a MoU with other ETQAs because their legislation does not entitle them to do so. SAQA did not have support from the key stakeholders from the very beginning.

one ETQA will be recognised by the other ETQA in the MoU agreement, giving one ETQA the right to monitor and audit the provider falling under the other ETQA. MoU may be concluded, for example, in terms of the following:

- 1) joint quality assurance of programme delivery where such programmes overlap with the primary focus of two (or more) ETQAs; and/or
- 2) sharing of responsibilities and expertise

Economic Sector ETQAs

Sector Education and Training Authorities are bodies established under the Skills Development Act of 1998 whose main purpose is to contribute to the improvement of skills in South Africa. A SETA is a body made up of representatives from labour, employers, key government departments and representatives from professional bodies. To date 25 SETAs have been registered to cover all sectors in South Africa, including the public sector. All SETAs are required to perform ETQA functions in the economic sector they cover. They all need to apply to SAQA for accreditation to perform this role. The functions of the SETAs involve the development and implementation of sector skills plans and the registration and promotion of learnerships.

In this sector, ETQAs and providers have sector specialist and quality assurance expertise as well as being single purpose providers³⁷.

These proliferations of bodies have rendered the NQF and SAQA bureaucratic and chaotic and as we shall see in chapter eight these were some of the problems which prompted the NQF Review.

Conclusion

The chapter has shown that the pre-election deliberations of the ANC/COSATU and other democratic forces of having an integrated system of education and training were not reflected in the structure of President Mandela's Government of National Unity (GNU) established in 1994. An Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG) that was established failed as was expected, to move the training portfolio from the Department of Labour to Education. A lot had to be re-thought in the context of the GNU since it was a different exercise than the process prior to the first democratic elections. In other words, the implications of the dynamics of the GNU had to be

³⁷ A single purpose provider is a provider that focuses the majority of its activities in the delivery of education and training relating to a single education and training field of its primary focus that the provider is accredited to deliver in.

worked out. This of course influenced the way in which the White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) (DNE 1995) was phrased. The WPET endorsed an integrated approach to education and training and pointed out that they are in fact closely related, but the Ministry of Education did not wish to assume responsibility for the provisioning of training.

Given this background, it might seem to appear that the people who sponsored the NQF bill, which became the SAQA Act (RSA 1995), were not genuine. In other words, it might have been what Jansen (2002) and others described as policy symbolism, which was designed to signal progress rather than to effecting real change on the ground.

The argument of this chapter and of the rest of the thesis is that when SAQA was mandated to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF, it did not take sufficiently into consideration the political, social and economic environment within which policy decisions have been taken. SAQA went on to take the SAQA Act seriously and developed a bureaucratic architecture, which ended up paralysing its functions. When some of the SAQA staff were asked during the interviews why they have opted for such a bureaucratic architecture, they would always point to the SAQA Act, that they were implementing the Act and that they had the backing of the people since it was passed in Parliament.

Surprisingly, SAQA did not follow the integrated approach; instead it developed a National Qualifications Framework that fits all learning and all qualifications within the education the education and training system. As shall be discussed further in chapter 9 an integrated approach was not going to address the issues of redress, according to SAQA's views. A comprehensive and strong NQF, according to their view, offered the potential to address some of the injustices inherited from apartheid. However, the extent to which this potential will ever be realised to any significant extent remains to be seen.

Chapter 8: From an ‘integrated approach’ to an ‘interdependent approach’-the development and implementation of the NQF.

Introduction and overview

The previous chapters have attempted to provide the background and analysis of the circumstances that led to establishment of the South African National Qualifications Framework in 1995 in order to integrate education and training. Chapter 7 in particular argued that SAQA might have taken the SAQA Act (RSA 1995) seriously when the key partners themselves might not have been genuine. It also argued that in carrying out its mandate of overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF, SAQA did not give due regard to the political, social and economic environment within which policy decisions have been taken. Instead of following an integrated approach to education and training, SAQA opted for a comprehensive and strong model of the NQF.

This chapter discusses some of the problems that have been experienced as a result of SAQA’s decisions to adopt a strong model of the NQF. Drawing on the Report of the Study Team (DoE & DoL 2002) and on interviews with key informants, the chapter points out some of the barriers to integration discussed in Chapter 3. It will then focus on the joint response by the Departments of Education and Labour to the Study Team’s Report. The joint response, *An Interdependent Qualifications Framework System* (DoE and DoL 2003) came in the form of a Consultative Document (CD) and the Ministers called for public comment on the document without committing themselves to it. This is normal procedure before a policy document is sent to cabinet for approval. The deadline for public responses was October 2003. An Inter-departmental Task Team, which produced the CD, received written submissions from the public in the latter part of 2003. We are now in the middle of 2006 and there has been no official communication since the end of the public consultation in October 2003.

The chapter will show the key shifts in the trajectory of the NQF in terms of:

- a shift from an ‘integrated approach’ (within a single NQF) to an ‘interdependent approach’ with three learning pathways (with possibilities of multiple NQFs)
- a shift of power from SAQA to three new bodies with substantive authority, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs): the Trade, Occupational and Professional Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council; the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council; the Higher Education and Training Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council and
- a very different ‘architecture’ of the NQF

Report of the Study Team on the Implementation of the NQF

In July 2001, the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, with the agreement of the Minister of Labour, M. Mdladlana, decided to set up an external Study Team³⁸ review on the implementation of the NQF (RSA 2001). The purpose of the Study Team was to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of the NQF/SAQA operations and to strengthen the NQF. This was in response to widespread criticism of the systems and procedures adopted by SAQA to implement the SAQA Act. Ten members were appointed to the Study Team plus three researchers, to make a total of thirteen.

It is well understood that particular people are likely to represent specified interests and to hold certain views, and in this regard it is important to take note of the constituencies represented by members of the Study Team. Prof. Jairam Reddy, the then Chairperson of the Council of the United Nations University, headed the Study

³⁸ It was an external review since it did not involve any SAQA staff in the Team. SAQA actually was in support of an internal review process arguing that an external review would slow down implementation at a crucial stage of development, which turned out to be true.

Team. Trevor Coombe³⁹, the then consultant in the DoE, was head of Research for the Study Team and the other two members were private consultants. Two of the members represented the university sector, two were from the mining sector, two from Education, one represented the HSRC and three were International Advisors⁴⁰. Some observations must first be made on the composition of the Study Team.

It is significant that the then Chairperson of the SAQA board, Dr Mokubung Nkomo, was appointed to the team. It was understood by some of my respondents that this was intended to signal that government was not doing something behind SAQA's back and that the NQF had its full support. Some sectors however expressed some concerns on the lack of fairness of representation in the Study Team. For instance, in its comments on the NQF Study Team report, SAQA Inter-NSB felt that the larger number of Higher Education expertise represented on the Study Team skewed the emphasis of the report towards higher education interests. They expressed their concerns like this:

A number of NSBs noted the larger weighting of Higher education expertise represented on the Study Team...by contrast, there appeared to be only one member each from the labour (COSATU), SETA (the MQA⁴¹) and business (Chamber of Mines) sectors respectively. While the Study Team was clearly and appropriately constituted as a technical team rather than a stakeholder body, expertise and experience from the labour and industry sectors could have been drawn on more extensively (SAQA Inter-NSB 2002:3).

This argument was supported by the views expressed by one of my respondents from Higher Education who commented on the composition of the Study Team as follows:

It was one ministry in particular, which forced the composition to be of a particular nature including people like Michael Young and others, and others whom they wanted to keep out of this entirely. So there was politics behind who was on and who wasn't, whom they want and whom they didn't want. Overall, we were very pleased on the

³⁹ Trevor Coombe was in the Inter-Ministerial Working Group that sponsored the NQF bill. He was also involved in the writing of the White Paper on Education and Training (1995). We will soon see his involvement in the Joint Task Team set up to respond to the Study Team Report.

⁴⁰ Of the three International Advisors, two were employed by the universities in their countries: Prof. Michael Young, Institute of Education, University of London; Ms Ruth Moorhouse, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand (Former CEO: New Zealand Qualifications Authority). Mr Ron Tuck was a private consultant and former CEO, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

⁴¹ Mining Qualifications Authority

eventual composition of the Study Team and we were quite confident that the Study Team would go into issues that go beyond implementation (PC 01, 09/12/05).

Reading from these sentiments, it looks like there was some hope within the Higher Education constituency that their concerns with regards to SAQA and the NQF would be addressed.

A second observation to be made is concerned with the timing of the NQF review process. The SAQA Act was promulgated in October 1995, the first Authority members were appointed on 31 May 1996 and the first meeting of the Authority was held on 2 August 1996. SAQA started its operations in mid 1996 and by 2001 an external review was set up to look into implementation issues. There are arguments that it was too soon to establish the review of the NQF. One argument is that when an initiative like the NQF is being implemented, it will take time before improvements can be seen. The other is that even though the review was too soon, but it has gone a long way towards refining people's minds about what is needed out of an NQF. The review has highlighted the tensions between the two Departments of Education and Labour and it has focussed the collective minds on what the priorities should be. In those terms the review was seen by many of my respondents as useful.

The third observation to make is on the mandate of the Study Team. It was appointed to look into the implementation of the NQF against the key question: "How do we speed up the implementation of the NQF?" (DoE & DoL 2003: 4). However, Jansen (2004) pointed out that some of the recommendations of the Study Team clearly moved beyond just implementation by 'altering the size, nature and the scope of the authority of SAQA' (pp. 54). For example, by recommending that the SAQA Board be reduced in number and shifting power from SAQA to new Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs).

One issue which may be regarded as a more organisational and implementation was that of streamlining the entire SAQA/NQF architecture. It was recognised that such kind of architecture was unsustainable both financially and at the human level. This point will be further elaborated later in the chapter. Having given the background to

the Study Team, the following sub-section will delineate the issues that led to the establishment of the external review.

Factors which prompted the NQF review

There was a general concern among respondents that the review arose from the fact that the NQF model did not work in practice, people were getting frustrated. The outcomes-based NQF did not have its roots enough in everybody's actual practice.

Many respondents argued that the NQF model was not working in schools, which led to Curriculum 2002 Review (DoE 2000f) and an attempt to implement a different curriculum model (DoE 2001). We have seen in the previous section that the General Education and Training Certificate for compulsory schooling shifted from being unit standards-based to a whole school qualification.

The third point that also came up during interviews was the awareness that the vision of a comprehensive NQF South Africa was trying to implement was under attack in other countries such as in New Zealand. It has been shown in Chapter 3 that New Zealand implemented the same model and encountered a lot of problems, which resulted in the removal of the university sector and school qualifications from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

In chapter two of the Report (pp 3-4), the Study Team presents a summary of why it was appointed. It was recognised that the NQF has become cumbersome, overly bureaucratic and confusing to use. This prompted the establishment of the Study Team in order to find a way out of this impasse and the "broad malaise of discontent with the NQF and SAQA" (pp 3), which took hold among stakeholders. A strong view held in the submissions to the Study Team (summarised in chapter 3) is that it is highly questionable whether the policies, procedures, delivery systems, other resources and capacities, which have been put in place by SAQA to establish and develop the NQF, are appropriate or indeed workable. Of major concern was the

overlap and duplication of functions especially the range of bodies operating in the area of standard setting and quality assurance.

Another area of concern was the NQF and its delivery system. As we have seen in the previous section SAQA established 12 NSBs, one for each learning field. Each NSB would designate the official sub-fields and for each sub-field the NSBs would then establish SGBs to write unit standards and to propose qualifications. A sub-field may have more than one SGB. This structural arrangement put in place has given rise to massive bureaucracy. The lack of capacity both human and financial to manage this bureaucracy forms the basis of criticisms that prompted the establishment of the Study Team.

Another factor that contributed to the review was the alleged comprehensiveness of the NQF, its 'one-size fits all' model. Much of the criticism was coming from the university sector who argued that the NQF was treating university education in the same way as it treated other sectors. SAQA has not been sensitised to the values and essential role of higher education. International comparisons are used to advance this argument.

One other factor that was not addressed by the Study Team but contributed to the tensions and difficulties associated with the NQF can be derived from SAQA's favourite phrase, that "we would build the NQF on road we walked on." Saleem Badat, the then Chief Executive of the CHE, expressed his views, which are quoted in full to retain the flavour and thrust of their fundamental criticism of the notion about 'making the road as you walk it':

My response and many of our responses have been that when you make the road as you walk it, you can end up at a cliff and there is only one way down after that. The idea that you create an entire architecture on the basis of making the road as you walk it seems a little too slippery. But it continued to be articulated all the time. Yes, you cannot always rest on theory and experiences and so on when you are designing something new, but the idea that you can simply design something as you walk is not a very comforting one either. I think that created all sorts of problems. The people got into the entire discourse on the NQF, constructing it as they walk and so on and were not able to take on criticisms and were becoming prisoners of their own discourses (PC 01, 09/12/05).

Allowing for differences in formulation and emphasis, it is possible to distil from the above descriptions three broad themes, which will be used as a framework for further discussion of the recommendations of the Study Team. These are:

- the entire NQF architecture and the role of SAQA
- the integration of education and training, and
- power struggle between the Departments of Education and Labour

Architecture of the NQF

a) Structural issues

As we have seen, this was a key organisational and implementation issue that prompted the establishment of the Study Team. Its core question was based on the fitness of purpose of the current NQF architecture. The common theme running through the submissions to the Study Team's review on the NQF is that the standards setting process at all levels of the NQF through a highly bureaucratic system of NSBs and SGBs has not worked in practice especially for the higher education sector (SAUVCA 2001; 2002). This problem of bureaucracy in the NQF structures was also highlighted in the research carried out by the HSRC into the work of the NSBs (Kraak & Mahomed 2001). The HRSC report pointed out that the structures put in place by SAQA (12 NSBs and over 100 SGBs to design standards and qualifications) were overly ambitious and SAQA lacked human resources and expertise to deliver those structures.

The concern from higher education was that the organisation of NSBs/SGBs in learning areas was not compatible with Higher Education. The critique is that whole qualifications especially undergraduate degrees are not based on a single NSB learning area, but include knowledge from other areas, 'one qualification has to

present itself across a number of NSBs for the purpose of registration' (Ensor 2003: 336), as examples given later will show. This means that 'one NSB per cluster of unit standards' does not work in HE, but may be appropriate in the field of skills training.

There was a widely shared view among the submissions made to the Study Team that the NSB/SGB model forms a rules-bound, inflexible bureaucracy and is just inefficient and ineffective. There is a general agreement that the model no longer provides a suitable organisational framework for the future development of the NQF and that the structures should be replaced.

Some of the criticisms include:

Overlap and duplication of functions

Some work carried out in South Africa (Gevers 2001; Kraak and Mahomed 2001; Morrow 2001; Ensor 2003) pointed out some overlaps and duplication of functions of NSBs, SGBs and SETAS.

We have already seen some overlaps between interim-registration process and the generation of new standards by SGBs. In addition to this point, it was pointed out that much of the experience and expertise developed during the interim-registration exercise was not being put to use in the SAQA-initiated SGBs (Gevers 2001).

The following examples show some overlaps with SGBs operating across organising fields and within the same fields:

- NSB01 (Agriculture & Nature Conservation) has registered an SGB for 'Nature Conservation' while NSB07 (Human and Social Studies) has registered another SGB for 'Society and Environmental Interactions' and NSB10 (Health Science &

Social Services) has registered an SGB for 'Environmental Science and Management;

- NSB02 (Culture & Arts) has registered an SGB for 'Heritage Management Studies' while NSB04 (Communication Studies & Language) has registered an SGB for 'Archives and Records Management';
- NSB11 (Services) has registered an SGB for 'Hospitality, Tourism, Travel, Leisure and Gaming' and registered another SGB for 'Tourism Guiding';
- NSB02 (Culture & Arts) has registered an SGB for 'Recreation & Fitness', an SGB for 'Sport' and another SGB for 'Sport, Recreation & Fitness' (SAQA 2005)

The HSRC study on the work of NSBs (Kraak and Mahomed 2001) also pointed out some overlaps in terms of membership of NSBs, SGBs and SETAs. It was found out that in some cases representatives from these constituencies are often the same people. For example,

- NSB09 (Health Sciences and Social Services) has registered an SGB for 'Social Work' while representatives of the social Work field sit on NSB07 (Human and Social Studies) (Ensor 2003).

These examples illustrate the lack of clear boundary distinctions between NSBs and between SGBs and this has resulted in the overlapping of areas of responsibility. This has shown that these structures have been established without clear coherent and guiding principles, and without serious consideration of the ways in which overlaps between the areas of responsibility of various SGBs, working in isolation from each other, 'gives rise to conflicts and disagreements between their recommendations (Morrow 2001: 10).

Ensor (2003) commented that this boundary definition is not a matter of epistemology, but rather an issue of balance of power between different interest groups. This issue will be addressed later in the chapter.

The South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) in its written submission to the NQF Study Team (SAUVCA 2001) pointed out some elements of duplication in quality assurance. The Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) established the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) as the ETQA for the Higher Education and Training Band. SAQA has been responsible for overseeing the quality assurance functions of ETQAs, including the HEQC. The Skills Development Act (1997) requires SETAs to secure accreditation from SAQA as an ETQA and in respect, SAQA has granted SETAs (as ETQAs) quality assurance status extending to the HE sector. SAQA has also given SETAs, as SGBs, the authority to generate qualifications standards for HE qualifications and this has caused a lot of concern in the sector.

Higher Education was concerned that the involvement of SETAs in its territory would result in over-surveillance of higher education and cause bitterness within the sector. Further, they felt that SETAs could use their financial muscle to fund higher education programmes that are not consistent with higher education priorities and plans for the Ministry of Education. As expressed in the Study Team Report (DoE & DoL 2002), SETAs are narrowly shaping two-year diplomas that are based on unit standards and carrier focussed than the usual technikon three-year diplomas.

The submission by SAUVCA expressed the concerns from HE as follows:

The Higher Education Act vests the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and qualifications with the Council for Higher Education and its HEQC. No SETA ETQA should have direct access to any public Higher Education programme, funded by the Department of Education. Responsibility for quality assurance in the Higher Education sector should reside unequivocally with the HEQC: all programmes which are funded by public money should be quality assured under the auspices of the HEQC (SAUVCA 2001: 14).

The general feeling was that SETAs should only be involved in HE activities after receiving authorisation from HE.

However, submissions from the skills development sector felt that SETAS should retain their statutory right of setting standards and quality assure them, but this has to be done under the authority of SAQA.

The Department of Labour rejected the idea that SETAs should be accountable to HEQC arguing that formal education institutions are not adequately equipped to control labour market standards of learning (DoE & DoL 2002). The DoL insisted that if there is a need, SETAs should be allowed to set and quality assure standards in HE.

We can see the differences in opinion between skills development and formal education, which will later explain the tensions between the two departments.

Incapacity of SAQA and its subsidiary structures

Most of the criticism was coming from universities who were very critical of SAQA's implementation system and find its processes complicated, its conceptual framework underdeveloped, and its language confusing. A strong view is held that the procedures and delivery systems put in place by SAQA to establish and develop the NQF was not working.

Many submissions raised concerns about SAQA's inability to engage with the development and implementation issues and its incapacity to carry out its task effectively. The view from higher education is that SAQA has failed to gain credibility in the higher education sector due to its lack of sound intellectual leadership to deal with challenges in the sector. As captured in one submission,

The organisation does have a credibility problem especially in universities given that the second tier of leadership lacks the academic credentials and administrative experience at senior levels within higher education to advance the implementation cause of the NQF. A string of young persons, without in-depth knowledge of what really happens in universities with respect to academic administration, constitute a problem. SAQA staff simply cannot talk with authority to senior university officials about the requirements for a doctorate without having achieved such credentials themselves (SAUVA 2001: 15).

There is also the concern that the constitution of NSBs does not make them eminently qualified to judge qualifications and that, as a group, NSBs currently lack the experience and expertise to do so. There is a feeling that SAQA under-estimated the level of understanding and knowledge needed by NSBs to engage effectively with the registration process (Kraak and Mahomed 2001). This has been compounded by the fact the work of NSBs is voluntary and the momentum of the earlier phase has been lost due to lack of progress and lack of clear direction (ibid.).

b) Design and conceptual issues

Three key issues have been raised especially from the higher education sector (SAUVCA 2001). The first was the concern that SAQA's Standards Generating Bodies have begun to design new higher education qualifications in circumstances that amount to academic vacuum. The second was to do with whether eight levels of the NQF were enough to accommodate higher education, and the third was the separation of standard setting from quality assurance. These three issues will be discussed briefly in turn.

Academic policy vacuum

The concerns expressed from the university sector are that SAQA's NSBs and SGBs have so far operated in an academic policy vacuum, and without the guidance of a unified qualifications framework for higher education. A strong view held is that the environment in which SAQA and its subsidiary structures operated was far from enabling (SAUVCA 2001). The absence of a conceptual framework, e.g. for what kinds of qualifications and standards need to be generated, in what order and relationship between them was clearly recognised that it was not a good thing. It was noted that SAQA capitalised on the absence of a policy framework by writing draft qualifications totally focussed on the work place including qualifications for higher education without giving due regard to the priorities of formal education.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) released a draft New Academic Policy document (NAP) (DoE 2002) which gave a detailed framework that was intended to help fill this 'vacuum'. This was reflected against the purpose and scope of the NAP, which had the intention of developing

- a conceptual framework for the development of programmes and qualifications within a co-ordinated single higher education sector, and
- a policy framework, which will shape and supplement the policies and practices of SAQA processes and structures for NQF implementation and the CHE's HEQC (DoE 2002).

The assumption was that SAQA processes and practices would be informed by this document in its engagement with qualifications driven reforms in the higher education sector. This was also seen as the only way an orderly transformation of the HE sector could be achieved. However, at the time of writing this thesis, the DoE has not approved the NAP document as policy.

Number of NQF levels

We have seen that SAQA adopted an NQF with 8 levels, and has appealed for symmetry around the critical FET/HET interface between levels 4 and 5. There are 4 levels for pre-higher education (levels 1-4) and 4 levels for higher education (levels 5-8). Symbolically, the symmetry is an indication of the equal importance of the two domains on either side of the L4-5 interface.

The argument from the higher education sector is that certainly you are squeezing higher education into four levels when you really require 7 or 8.

The NQF Study Team (DoE & DoL 2002) proposed that there should be 6 levels for the HE Band and if approved, it would be an NQF with 10 levels. This is what we saw with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, it started with eight levels and then moved on to ten.

Standards setting, quality assurance and provision

We have seen that SAQA has put in place separate systems of standards setting and quality assurance. Many submissions to the Study Team pointed the fact that the separation of standards setting and quality assurance has made the system too complex and counter-productive. The Study Team took the view that the same bodies should conduct both standards setting and quality assurance. The GQSS-project under the auspices of SAUVA (2001-2003) and the New Academic Policy (NAP) (DoE 2002) are important initiatives in this regard. There are contrasting arguments to this. One strong and dominant view supported the linking of standards setting and quality assurance arguing that this will likely to lead to greater stability in the implementation of the framework (SAUVA 2002). Another view shared by the minority is that the two systems should not be directly linked, fearing that the one body takes on the role of both referee and player in the same game.

According to the regulations under SAQA Act (1995), an ETQA may be accredited by SAQA provided that its function of quality assurance is separate from and independent of educational provision or delivery. Providers are only given responsibility of provision, while the conceptual work involved is delegated to groups of representative stakeholders, centrally appointed: NSBs and SGBs for standards setting, and ETQAs for quality assurance.

Some academics (Ensor & Ogude 2001; Ensor 2003) have criticised the NQF for making a virtue of separating standards setting, accreditation and provision and vesting them in distinct sets of structures. The critique is that NSBs and SGBs over-specify learning outcomes disregarding the social and institutional context in which learning takes place and ignoring the role of practitioners in learning. The argument was that only those who teach can provide the context and content required to make statements of learning outcomes and assessment criteria meaning full and effective (CHE 2004). That is to say, the responsibility of curriculum design and evaluation

should be vested in the hands of 'insiders', members who share a common community of practice and trust.

Although these issues were not raised in detail in the submissions to the Study Team, the report acknowledges this point when it argues that standards and qualifications must not become divorced from the education and training providers and that

the generation of standards and qualifications without the adequate involvement of providers can create problems of practicability and validity (DoE & DoL 2002: 78).

However, this requires careful interpretation. This is not a shift from the general principle of separating standards and qualifications from curriculum and learning programmes. The Study Team hold the view that unit standards and qualifications must be generated nationally, but suggested new standards setting and quality assurance bodies in its recommendations (p. 133-134).

The report recommended that the current NSBs and SGBs be disbanded in a properly phased manner with the retention of members' experience and expertise.

In an attempt to try to accommodate the concerns of higher education with respect of the presence of SETAs in their sector, the report recommended that the SETA's quality assurance/standards-setting function be limited to a level 6 'ceiling'.

The SETAs should be recognised as the standards setting bodies for their defined economic sectors for levels 1 to 4 and for unit standards based qualifications and unit standards in their defined economic sectors for NQF levels 5 and 6. The CHE should be recognised as standards setting body for levels 7 and 8 and for whole qualifications for NQF levels 5 and 6 (p. 133- 134).

Limiting activities of SETAs to only level 6 seems to imply that high-level skills and knowledge can only be generated and acquired in a university context raising questions about the assumption underpinning qualifications frameworks that learning can take place in a variety of contexts.

The report also recommended that the Department of Education should be responsible for standards setting for schools (grades R-12), technical colleges and ABET non-vocational qualifications and standards. For generic vocational standards, it should be the responsibility of the Department of Labour. This is reflecting some sharp divisions between education and training, which SAQA and the NQF cannot resolve. You have on one hand, SAQA trying to develop and implement a unified framework and on the other; the two Departments of Education and Training have irreconcilable differences.

The Integration of Education and Training

This section draws on the barriers to integration discussed in Chapter 3. The first to be considered is epistemological. The creation of an integrated national framework for learning achievements was based on the assumption that all knowledge has the same logical form and that the context of learning might be different, but the outcomes can be matched, equivalency can be established, measured and calibrated on a qualifications framework.

Some academic and policy analysts in South African Higher Education (Ensor & Ogude 2001; Morrow 2001) have objected to this assumption arguing that knowledge acquisition depends on the context in which learning takes place and different forms of knowledge are based on different epistemic culture, norms and discourse.

It is apparent from these debates that the issue of the sites of knowledge production, the value of that knowledge and the learning that can be associated with it remain areas of serious contestation in the debates of the NQF in South Africa.

Epistemological arguments that were expressed in the submissions to the Study Team had focussed on the implementation of a unit standards-based NQF across the whole education and training system. Higher education in particular argued that unit

standards were incompatible with university education, and it was feared the approach would result in the fragmentation of higher education. The over-specification of outcomes was challenged on the grounds that it was in conflict with the open-ended nature of educational learning. The use of common level descriptors for both education and training was criticised for being too general to be meaningful.

The second barrier was political. The origins of the political differences between the two Departments may be located in the period when an Inter-Ministerial Working Group, established by the two Departments, failed to transfer the training portfolio from the Department of Labour to Education to constitute the new National Department of Education and Training. This meant that the Minister of Labour was to give up some of his powers to the Department of Education. We have seen the background in chapter six. It is a view shared by many of my respondents that what ever followed thereafter was a form of political struggle of who is controlling what. On one hand the DoL wanted to have control over Education through the NQF/SAQA structures and on the other hand the DoE and Higher Education viewed the work of NQF structures as an intrusion on their turf.

An Integrated approach to education and training implies a partnership between Education and Labour, and such partnership had existed during most of the period since 1994. It has been imperfect, at time almost dormant. Too often the two camps have been very distant from one another, none more so than before the launch of the Study Team on the implementation of the NQF, which signalled an attempt by the two Ministries to pull the two sides together around a common enterprise. The Study Team (DoE & DoL 2002: 67) noted that the two departments,

have made no attempt to analyse in further detail how the integrated approach to education and training should be operationalised, especially in areas where the departments do not see eye to eye.

In their response to the NQF review process, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA 2003: 71) also confirms the political contestations between the two departments:

It is perhaps appropriate, at this time, to begin to ask some questions in order to get beyond the policy framework to the realisation of the vision and transformation agenda of the NQF. To achieve this, commitment from all parties (especially the two departments) is essential. Clearly, there is resistance to change. However, this does not seem to be based on the NQF itself but is the result of naked contestations by people/departments who are (or should be) on the same side. It needs to be recognised that the tensions are probably as a result of power imbalances and that power is an end in itself and a way of protecting entrenched interests.

The third barrier is institutional. The main issue that was raised in the submissions to the Study Team was the absence of clear linkages between NQF/SAQA that set the outcomes and the institutions that deliver them. It has been pointed out that the NQF was divorced from any institutional provision or practice. This raised further questions given that in an outcomes-based framework the processes such as standard setting and assessment rely on trust but have been separated from such practices. Young (2002) made a similar point when he suggested that outcomes based qualifications frameworks are likely to be ineffective if they are not 'based in the shared values and practices of communities of trust' (p. 60).

Response to the Study Team Report:

It was a general view among respondents that the Study Team has produced a comprehensive and impressive report. In their final conclusion the Study Team has captured the views of many as follows:

In a remarkably short space of time the NQF has become woven into the fabric of the South African learning system. The process has been dynamic and fraught with a mixture of high expectation and deep misgiving. As the NQF design has rolled out, an interesting polarity has developed among those involved in the process. Everyone supports the NQF and its objectives. Almost no one thinks it is done entirely correctly. Some feel so alienated by the manner of its implementation that they are close to abandoning it (DoE & DoL 2002: 131).

In its submission on behalf of the university sector in response to the Study Team report, SAUVCA (2002), was pleased that some of its concerns put forward were addressed adequately by the Study Team, especially those to do with the entire NQF architecture. However, SAUVCA had a strong opinion that the Study Team did not

draw sufficiently from international developments in national qualification frameworks of higher education's continuing involvement and uncomfortable relationship with prescriptive and over-detailed outcomes-based qualifications framework in general.

Overall, the university sector welcomed the following recommendations made by the Study Team among many others.

- That the qualifications framework should be based on ten levels rather than eight
- That standards setting and quality assurance should be under the same roof and that current NSBs should be disestablished
- That the NQF Strategic Partnership (comprising the DoE, DoL and SAQA) and the strategic funding should be implemented (ibid.).

On the other side, the SAQA Inter-NSB (SAQA 2002) diverges from the Study Team report on fundamental issues. For instance, they do not agree that the present NQF architecture is not holding and they have the opinion that standards-setting function should be separated from quality assurance.

However, the Inter-NSB response acknowledges that there were a number of flaws in the existing NQF structures, but attribute these to poor funding on the work of NSBs and SGBs and the lack of interface or links between standards-setting and quality assurance structures. However, they maintain that there are some practical and conceptual arguments for keeping the two structures separate. They argued that the reconfiguration of the entire system proposed would result in the loss of capacity, energy and commitment gained through the process of establishing the NQF. However this argument can be countered by suggesting that the new structures proposed could retain the staff expertise and experience gained under the terms of the old structures.

Joint response by the two Departments

We have seen that the Study Team was appointed in 2001 and reported in April 2002. It was responded to, and elaborated on, by an Inter-departmental Task Team of senior officials from the Departments of Education and Labour and published as the Consultative Document: *An Interdependent National Qualification Framework System* (DoE and DoL 2003).

As the Consultative Document (CD) makes clear, the Ministers were not interested in separate responses:

Neither department should make a public comment on the report until both departments had agreed on a joint position in the light of the Study team's report and the public response (DoE and DoL 2003: 2).

It took a year of intensive discussion, consultation and drafting for the Task Team to formulate a joint response. It took the form of a new document, not a checklist of responses to individual proposals (such a checklist appears as an annexure to the CD, pp 49-61).

The joint response is going to be analysed in this section under the following headings:

- The three learning pathways proposed
- The three separate Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs) proposed
- NQF leadership

The three learning pathways

The Interdepartmental Task Team's position is that the tension between the two departments may have arisen partly because their respective roles are not clearly

acknowledged and distinguished in the NQF. The Task Team believes that the structures and policies put in place by SAQA deliberately blur the distinction between institution-based and workplace-based learning. The CD commented as follows:

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the two worlds of discipline-based learning (mainly in institutions) and skills development (mainly in the workplace, including professional practice) have co-existed uneasily within the common qualifications framework (pp. 6)

It is the challenge of qualification frameworks to recognise the different modes of learning and at the same time promote their interface, where education and training co-exist as interdependent systems with links between them.

With this in mind, the CD proposes three different but inter-related learning pathways along a learning spectrum or continuum. The two ends of the learning spectrum are marked by discipline-based learning (typically in institutions such as schools and universities) and occupational context-based learning (typically at the workplace). Between these two modes is career-focussed or general vocational learning, which may relate to both pathways, but not reduced to either.

The CD proposes that these pathways are not to be equated with sites of delivery or institutional types and that they form the basis for three distinct but equivalent qualification pathways. They hold the view that different contexts of learning produce learning that can be regarded as equivalent. We have seen however that this assertion is highly questioned.

The title, “Interdependent National Qualifications Framework System: Consultative Document”, according to one of my respondents,

expressed the new perspective, which made explicit the respective interests of the institution-based and labour market-based parties and the manner in which these relied upon one another within the NQF framework. The concept of inter-dependence was an attempt to elaborate the ‘integration’ formula and provide the means of resolving the recognised tensions between education and training (PC 36, 10/11/05)

On the three learning pathways, the second respondent has this to say:

The three-track conceptualisation of education and training (General, General-Vocational and Trade/Occupational/Professional) and the three QCs (as well as their inter-connections) reflected the dual interests of the two departments at the time and must be understood as negotiated positions between the DoE and DoL representatives on the Task Team that were designed to hold those tensions in check and enable them to be expressed creatively and on the basis of trust and collegiality (PC 14, 29/10/04).

What emerges from the CD is an NQF that comprises a three by three grid, with articulation columns to enable vertical, diagonal and horizontal articulation between qualifications (table below

Proposed revised National Qualifications Framework (DoE & DoL 2003. 17

NQF band	General pathway	Articulation column	General Vocational/ Career-Focused pathway	Articulation column	Trade, Occupational and Professional pathway
HET	Discipline-based qualifications	Articulation credits	Career-focussed qualifications	Articulation credits	Occupational recognition or context-based qualifications
FET	Discipline-based qualifications	Articulation credits	General vocational qualifications	Articulation credits	s unique to the workplace
General Education	General education qualifications				

As we shall see later, all the NQF stakeholders vehemently opposed the three track concept proposed by the Task Team, arguing that they represented a retreat from the founding ideals of the NQF and a betrayal of the concept of the integration of education and training.

Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs)

At the level of organisation, the CD proposes three separate Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils (QCs) to be responsible for the implementation of the NQF in the three different learning pathways discussed above. The proposed new structures will have the following functions:

- Mapping and co-ordinating national qualifications design and standard generation in their respective band
- Recommending to SAQA the registration of standards and qualifications on the NQF
- Co-ordinating quality assurance of qualification and promotion of quality within their respective pathway
- Creating new communities of trust in qualifications design, standards generation and quality assurance within its sector (DoE & DoL 2003).

As can be seen these new structures proposed will have both standards setting and quality assurance functions. It is important to note that the three QCs proposed do not represent a one to one correspondence with the three learning pathways, except for the proposed TOP (Trade, Occupational and Professional Qualifications) pathway: the General and Career-focussed vertical pathways are combined and split horizontally by level, with the GENFET QC overseeing NQF levels 1-4 and the HI-ED QC overseeing Levels 5-10 (if the ten level framework proposed is approved).

- The TOP QC (Trade, Occupational and Professional Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council)- a reconfigured National Skills Authority (NSA)- will be responsible for mapping and co-ordinating qualifications design, standards generation and quality assurance for competency standards and registration criteria in trade, occupational and professional practice unique to the workplace

with their nomenclature distinct from qualifications within the ambit of the other QCs. TOP QC would report through to the Minister of Labour.

- GENFET QC (General and Further Education and Training Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council)- a reconfigured Umalusi- will be responsible for qualifications mapping and design, standards generation and quality assurance up to level 4, except for qualification under the ambit of the TOP QC. GENFET QC would report to the Minister of Education
- HI-ED QC (Higher Education and Training Qualifications and Quality Assurance Council)- a reconfigured HEQC- will be responsible for all qualifications and quality assurance in higher education- except for qualifications under the ambit of the TOP QC. HI-ED QC would report through to the Minister of Education.

As we shall see later, the idea of a TOP QC was criticised in the submissions on the CD. The worry is that work-related (or vocational) education would once again be relegated to second-class status.

It is important to note that even though the proposed 3 QCs would replace SAQA's NSB-SGB system for standards setting, the CD made it clear that

provision would be made for a number of SAQA's specialist staff in Standards Development and Quality Assurance to transfer to an appropriate QC (pp. 26).

In essence, it means that the substantive authority for NQF implementation shifts from SAQA to QCs with SAQA taking a broader oversight and co-ordinating role rather than an operational function.

NQF leadership

The CD rejected the NQF Strategic Partnership (comprising the DoE, DoL and SAQA) proposed by the Study Team. It could not agree on a tripartite alliance with

SAQA since their statutory and constitutional responsibilities were not the same. However, the two Departments accepted joint responsibility for providing strategic leadership with a much improved relationship with SAQA.

The CD proposed that the Inter-departmental NQF Strategic Team of the Ministries of Education and Labour become a permanent structure that will:

- Be a permanent point of liaison between SAQA and the two department
- Take advice from the proposed National HRD Forum and the NQF Forum
- Develop a broad national plan for the implementation of the NQF
- Promote the alignment of NQF implementation with the government's HRD strategy
- Advise Ministers on SAQA's annual business plan and budget
- Consult regularly with the National Treasury on the funding of NQF implementation; and
- Provide secretariat to the inter-departmental HRD Co-ordinating Committee (pp. 38)

It seems that these proposals might be giving the Inter-departmental NQF Strategic Team executive powers to have direct control over the implementation of the NQF.

What will be the role of SAQA?

The following acknowledgement in the CD sums it up:

In the light of the proposals for a new NQF architecture, it is apparent that the role of SAQA would change. The most important alteration would be that (once the NSBs had been disbanded and QCs established) SAQA would have much less direct responsibility for the generation of standards and qualifications. However, SAQA would continue to have overall executive responsibility for the development and implementation of the NQF (pp.39)

The CD proposed the much-reduced functions of SAQA as follows:

- Execute the annual remit of the Ministers of Education and Labour

- Maintain the national framework for standards generation and quality assurance
- Maintain and develop the NQF level descriptors
- Maintain and develop the register of national qualifications
- Maintain and develop the National Learner' Record Database (NLRD)
- Evaluate foreign qualifications
- Secretariat to the NQF Forum
- International liaison
- Research (ibid.).

Response to the Consultative Document

The CD was released in July 2003 and the Ministers called for public comment on the document without committing themselves to it. According to my respondents, this is normal procedure before a policy document is sent to cabinet for approval.

The Task Team received the written submissions from the public on the Consultative Document in the latter part of 2003. The round table consultations between the Inter-departmental Task Team and SAQA, the NSBs, CHE, NSA, Umalusi, professional bodies, unions, business and others took place in November 2003. One of my respondents commented that 'early in the new year 2004 the Minister of Labour made clear that he did not wish the task team to continue its work' (PC 14, 29/10/04). This has caused some delays in processing of the responses received to the NQF Consultative Document.

According to evidence from submissions consulted and on interviews conducted with representatives from the Task Team, almost all the NQF stakeholders did not accept the Interdependent NQF System proposed in the Consultative Document. They argued that the new system represented a shift away from the original agenda of an integrated system of education and training. In fact there was a feeling that the CD was moving back towards the education system that existed during the apartheid era.

One of my respondents from the Higher Education sector expressed his opinion on the CD as follows:

The CD came as a cold war. There was some politics behind that. Had we gone with the Study Team report, perhaps things would have been much easier. It seems that certain social forces simply did not want to accommodate what we thought was very sensible with the Study Team. The CD presented something completely different and took us back in a sense. They tried to introduce a new architecture with 3 learning pathways, which made very little sense to us (PC 1, 9/12/05)

In actual fact, the Higher Education sector in general through SAUVCA (2003), did not oppose the idea of three learning pathways but

appreciates that the CD is attempting to recognise different modes of learning on the NQF and also to assign these to different bodies (largely based on already existing organisations) that will better be able to implement the NQF with due regard for the particular needs and interests of the providers (pp. 12).

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, there are differences between modes of learning in terms of cognitive demand, epistemology and knowledge base. And these differences need to be recognised. However, SAUVCA questioned the principle of equivalency between the TOP pathway and institution based learning asserted in the CD. Work place based knowledge and institution based knowledge are issues of epistemology we have already discussed earlier on. SAUVCA remain uncertain as to how far the TOP pathway

will be able to carry learners on its own, before converging with the HE pathway at higher levels to enable learners to gain access to the knowledge resources and research practices located in institutions of higher education. For this reason we doubt whether the proposed TOP pathway should go higher than Level 5 and, if it does, we doubt its equivalency with the levels of cognitive complexity required by institutions-based HE qualifications at levels 7-10 (pp. 13)

In short, the higher education sector including the CHE, HEQC and SAUVCA reject the extension of the TOP pathway into HE pathway.

A number of submissions (Inter-SGB/Inter-NSB response 2003; SAQA 2003) also noted the difficulty with articulation between qualifications in different levels and in

different pathways, given that the CD proposes the establishment of different sets of level descriptors for the different pathways.

The proposals for the new arrangements for qualifications, standards and quality assurance were seen as a step in the right direction from most respondents and written submissions. The question remains whether the new proposed structures go far enough in solving the problems of the NQF. An opinion was expressed in the Inter-SGB/Inter-NSB response (2003) and Business South Africa response (2003) that the Task Team appeared to be fixated on the disestablishment of NSBs and SGBs, regardless of the fact that it would be replaced by structures of a very similar nature.

On the issue of leadership, the proposals on the formation of an Inter-departmental NQF Strategic Team were welcome. Some submissions (for example CHE), however were of the opinion that this proposed legislative body should not exercise control over SAQA and the QCs as this will reduce them to just implementation bodies 'and in the process diluting their policy and regulation generating functions and compromising their autonomy' (CHE 2003: 27).

What was SAQA's response?

SAQA prepared a 66-page document in its response to the CD. The SAQA response incorporated a section entitled 'Setting the Record Straight (SAQA 2003: 11-16), which further enforces some of the concerns already highlighted above. The starting point of SAQA is that it was not involved in the discussions that led to the CD, which made it believe that the proposals made by the Task Team lacked the insight of insiders and hence questioned its credibility:

In short, it is SAQA's belief that the argument in some cases is based on incorrect assumptions, incomplete data and understanding of the situation 'on the ground' and the lack of insight from a key role player in the system (ibid: 11).

SAQA was totally against the three pathways proposed in the CD and still maintained that education and training must not be seen as a continuum but as integrated. They strongly believe in parity of esteem and equal opportunities. This argument and the failure to recognise these differences in our society are what led the problems experienced by the NQF in South Africa..

SAQA was of the opinion that FET colleges should be placed under the ambit of the TOP QC. Since the role of SAQA was not made very clear in the CD, SAQA made a proposal for its incorporation into the TOP QC.

SAQA strongly felt that if the CD was adopted, it might result in multiple NQFs rather than a single national framework. The following summed up this argument:

In short, with the establishment of three pathways of learning based on three qualification-types, supported by three sets of level descriptors, with responsibility for both standards setting and quality assurance within the three areas of learning allocated to three QCs, and finally no clear leadership authority indicated or attention given to the management of articulation and integration, it is difficult at this stage to be convinced that the proposal is in fact serious about the continued existence of one, single framework (pp. 31)

The responses to the CD are still being processed and a decision has not been reached yet. Trevor Coombe, one of the key players in the NQF process, provided a recent update on developments on the NQF review as follows:

In subsequent consultations between the new Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour after April 2004 certain positions were agreed in principle, among them: that NQF matters would henceforward be transacted between the Ministers, supported by their Director-General; that the supply side of education and training was not a Department of Labour matter; that a 10-level NQF was approved; that standards generation and quality assurance should be 'under one roof'; and the concept of two QCs (for Gen & FET, and HE respectively, with powers of delegation) was approved. A draft policy document was prepared in the DoE for the Ministers' consideration. Over the intervening months that document has undergone many revisions as a result of interaction between the DGs and the Ministers. We keenly await the Ministers' final approval and submission to Cabinet to secure the government's endorsement (E-mail, Feb, 2006).

It is difficult to predict what the outcome of the final document would be, but it seems some of the concerns raised in written submissions in response to the CD will be taken into consideration. It may be anticipated that the TOP QC and its associated

pathway and the Inter-departmental NQF Strategic Team have been dropped. It seems also that the supply side of training is going to be under education, but the question is whether that is going to solve the more fundamental issues.

Conclusions:

The chapter has discussed the NQF review process that constitutes the Study Report and the joint response by the Departments of Education and Labour to the Study Team Report. It emerged that the review has shifted the executive powers from SAQA to three new bodies and proposed a new NQF architecture. There was a recognition that SAQA has neither the capacity nor the expertise to implement or monitor NQF implementation on the ground, and must therefore accede to other organisations better equipped to do this. (SAQA was always meant to oversee the implementation of the NQF, but-of necessity-did most of the spadework itself from the outset). The proposals for different learning pathways in the education and training system are the result of the gradual awareness that the divisions between academic education and vocational training are still with us and that the NQF must be based on a recognition of the differences between modes of learning.

It has also emerged that many of the epistemological, political and institutional barriers to integration that have been raised are real and might be hard to overcome. However, many of them might have more to do with the strong and comprehensive NQF model adopted by SAQA rather than with integration as such.

It also worth noting in passing that some of the problems that have been experienced in the development and implementation of the NQF were not unique to South Africa. NVQs were under attack in the UK and in New Zealand, the Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was seen as having too much power and as a result the school curriculum was returned to the Department of Education, and universities were removed from the framework.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

Earlier chapters have argued that the fundamental concepts of the NQF in South Africa have their origins in reforms proposed by the outgoing White government from the early 1980s. The thesis has made some connections between the NQF debates that emerged within the trade union and democratic movements from the early 1990s and the education and training reforms initiated by the apartheid government in response to economic problems that were confronting the country. Further, this study has demonstrated that the NQF can also be understood as an evolutionary process rather than a product of a sharp break from the past. In this respect, the development of the NQF in South Africa is considered to be incremental.

The findings of this research are a sharp contrast to the politically motivated rhetoric that views the NQF as 'a means of transforming education and training in South Africa'. In other words the NQF was introduced in 1995 with the aim 'to redress the effects of a hated order' (French 2005: 54). This emphasised the very different circumstances in which the NQF in South Africa was being established when compared with many other NQFs developed in other countries, and also placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF. The thesis has argued that the objectives of the NQF have been established in very ambitious terms and that the NQF on its own could not deliver them. It is understood why they were expressed in such terms in 1995 given the past history. However, given what has been illuminated by this research about the origins of the NQF, and the experience of other countries, where the context of introducing NQFs might be seen as more favourable to the introduction of change, is it not wise to revisit the objectives of the NQF in South Africa? This thesis has argued that the development of NQFs have been driven by economic factors and as such viewing them as instruments of addressing the issues of redress might be highly questionable.

The findings of this research have raised a number of issues. Most important is the tension between the incrementalism thesis that has been established in this thesis and the policy discontinuities associated with the NQF in South Africa. Given what is known about the problems and challenges that the NQF is experiencing, it might be important for the people of South Africa to have the courage to acknowledge the continuities in the trajectory of the NQF. This will help to establish what the previous agenda was and might then inform what the democratic agenda might be. The policy implications of this are great. This might as highlighted above, require a revisit of the objectives of the NQF. However, given the legislative framework in which these objectives are embedded, it might be difficult to change them, but it might lead to a consideration of what priorities should be and how key targets can be specified.

This chapter draws the main themes that emerged out of this policy process and discusses the lessons for South Africa. To accomplish this task, the chapter is arranged as follows. Firstly, the main themes and lessons for South Africa are discussed. Secondly, the four research questions that were presented in Chapter 1 are reviewed based on the findings of this study. Thirdly, conclusions are drawn from the answers and other information collected during this research about the origins of the NQF and the trajectories that it took in South Africa.

In the light of these discussions, the thesis will raise issues for further investigation that go beyond the scope of this study. Matters will be raised concerning research strategies for the future outline of qualification driven reforms in South Africa. Issues will also be raised regarding the implications of this research for the development of qualifications frameworks in other countries, especially those within the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Themes that emerged

The first and key theme that emerged from this study was that the NQF in South Africa would appear to be introducing a revolutionary change in the education and

training system. The context of this is understood in terms of the history of apartheid and the associated inequalities and imbalances which it had left behind. The NQF was established after the first democratic elections as a tool for transforming education and training. However, it has been argued in this thesis that the development of the NQF could also be understood as an evolutionary process rather than a product of a clear break from the past. In other words, there was continuity and in that sense, its development could be said to be incremental. This brings into question the tension between the politically motivated endeavours to introduce the NQF as a break from the apartheid period and the policy continuities that have been established in this thesis. The policy implications arising from the findings of this research will be explored later in this concluding chapter.

The second theme that emerged from this study was that the changes in the economy and workplace have not had the democratic and liberating potential anticipated by some theorists who were influential in the early conceptualisation of qualifications frameworks. Piore and Sabel (1984)'s flexible specialisation thesis is seen by many to be a feature of a post-Fordist economy, and on the ways in which educational competencies are being redefined to accord with the logic of flexible accumulation. This view has influenced debates in many countries, including: the publication by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) of the British Baccalaureate (Finegold et al., 1990); the competency debates in Australia; and the integration of education and training in South Africa. The liberating and democratic potential that others (Piore and Sabel 1984; Mathews 1989b) saw in the forms of production became attractive to the trade union and other democratic movements in South Africa in the early 1990s, who were looking for alternative policies to replace the divided and racially segregated education and training systems.

However, this thesis has established that this romantic view postulated by Piore and Sabel has been severely criticised and in South Africa it has impacted upon production in a very limited way. The thesis has considered alternatives views of post-Fordism and it had adopted the position of the Regulation School and that of globalisation, which have provided important arguments about post-Fordism as a

new form of hierarchical division of labour. This brings into question the arguments about collapsing education and training under a single qualifications framework. The position this thesis is taking is that we are living in the realities of globalisations and that the divisions in society are still with us and we need to recognise them. Attempts to reduce the differences are desirable, but blurring them is against reality. What is suggested in this thesis is the development and implementation of a qualifications framework that attempts to reduce the gap between academic education and vocational learning, but at the same time recognising their differences.

The third theme that emerged from this study was that the NQF in South Africa has been driven by both economic and social justice (democratic) goals. The thesis has established that the economic goals were behind the education and training reforms initiated by apartheid since the early 1980s. These reforms were in response to the economic challenges that were confronting the country during that period. Changes in work practices called for education and training systems that could respond flexibly to changing needs, without hindrance by the inflexibility associated with academic and vocational divisions. In view of apartheid policies, these reforms were far from addressing social justice goals. From the early 1990s, the case for integration in South Africa was dominated by apartheid history and the issues of social justice (redress). As indicated earlier, by having redress as a goal emphasised the very unfavourable circumstances in which the NQF was being established in South Africa as this placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF. In the South African context, the NQF was meant to 'accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities' (RSA 1995). Social justice pressures called for 'parity of status' between learning pathways, the replacement of historically selective tracks by more flexible pathways, recognition of skills that have been traditionally been ignored or undervalued, and increasing overall participation and progression in the delivery system. How the NQF was expected to promote this remained unclear and this thesis has argued that a framework on its own cannot be able to achieve such ambitious objectives. On the other hand, South Africa was also faced with a challenge of preparing its citizens for economic competitiveness in the global market.

Much of the debate about the NQF in South Africa has focussed on the tensions between these economic and social justice goals (Allais 2003). In South Africa, it is not certain whether the balance between the economic goals for international competitiveness and those that favour the most impoverished in post apartheid South Africa could be achieved. However, there are signs to show that the NQF might be a win for capital. This brings into question the credibility of a NQF as an instrument of accelerating the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities. It has been argued in the thesis that the NQF was just a framework and could not guarantee the achievement of such ambitious objectives.

The fourth theme that emerged was that the epistemological, political, and institutional barriers to integration are real, important and harder to overcome. However, it was pointed out that such barriers might have been to do with the strong and comprehensive model of the NQF adopted by SAQA than with integration as such. The Study Team (DoE & DoL 2002) recognised this and recommended that differences between education and training should be recognised as necessary

The fifth theme that emerged from this thesis was that globalisation can be treated in different contexts to explain different events. For example, globalisation could be treated as discourse, and analyse its impact on policy text production in different contexts (with the underlying assumption that this discursive production has material effect-that is, it does shape policy). This helps to explain why similar approaches are emerging in a number of different countries in key elements of education policy. This thesis, for example, has established that many countries have pursued the development of qualifications frameworks in recent years in their attempt to solve similar problems.

Globalisation could also be treated as economic and explore capital's need of flexible workforces, and the desire for national education and training systems to 'capture' or 'attract' capital through its appropriately certificated/trained workers. This has been a key element in reforming South African education and training system since the

early 1980s, to solve economic problems. The influence of international and transnational agencies is also important here. This could also help to answer questions about policy convergence as it is often major organisations like the World Bank and OECD who require systems to be organised in ways that they can measure (for example through common qualifications) in order to assess their needs (Morrow and Torres 2000).

Globalisation could also be treated as cultural and explore the process of how the global articulates with the local. This looks at how global processes are contextualised or indigenised (Steiner-Khamsi 2003). For example, the New Zealand model of a qualifications framework has been resisted in South Africa and what we see is a process in which South Africa is trying to come up with an indigenous model that can work within the context and history of South Africa.

Related to the above considerations, a sixth theme that emerged was that of policy borrowing. The key important theme for this study was that even when similar ideas already existed in the local context, borrowing was done for leverage, legitimation, and recognition, both nationally and internationally. In South Africa, this was understood in the context of the legacies of apartheid, which made immediate change a political imperative. As a result, many of the more thoughtful contributions in the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and the HSRC/NTB Report (1984) were pushed to the background. In this sense, ideas had to originally appear to be brought in from outside. In this way, international trends provided an argument for what might have been (and indeed became) a highly contested education and training initiative. This is the politics of policy borrowing.

Review of the Research Questions

The thesis has attempted to provide some possible answers to the research questions that informed the study. The section that follows briefly examines the answers that were provided by this research.

What were the origins, both local and international, of the idea of a National Qualifications Framework in South Africa?

The answers to this research question build on the first theme that has been highlighted above. There are two contrasting views that explain the origins of the NQF in South Africa. One view conceptualises the NQF as a product of a break from the past and views it as a means of transforming education and training in South Africa. Undoubtedly, this transformation agenda has placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF in South Africa, and also explains the very unfavourable and different circumstances in which the NQF was being established compared with NQFs established in other countries. According to this view, the NQF is home-grown in terms of the unique factors of history and promise that have brought it into being. This history is normally associated with the work of the trade union movement and its social partners, which started in the early 1990s and consolidated in 1994. The trade union movement identified the problems of the then education and training system, especially those that affected the majority of its workers. These problems were associated with skill shortages that were confronting the South African labour market. They made numerous visits to other countries, drew examples from them and then came up with an idea of integrating education and training through a qualifications framework. It has been argued in this thesis that the guiding philosophy of the thinking behind the integration of education and training was based on the inadequate assumptions of Piore and Sabel's (1994) predictions of post-Fordism.

The second view, which is part of the contribution of this thesis, conceptualises the NQF process in South Africa as incremental rather than the product of a break from apartheid. This view still treats the NQF as homegrown, but in a different sense from that which has been described above. It locates the origins of the NQF in reforms initiated by the outgoing White government, which were proposed within the context of economic changes that were starting to take shape in South Africa towards the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. The ideological shift was a response to the

crisis of Fordism and the cauldron of discontent among Black students, workers and community groups who were protesting against apartheid. The government responded to these challenges by proposing reforms of education and training. Some key proposals that can be linked to the NQF were made in the de Lange Report in 1981 and in the HSRC/NTB Report in 1984. This was before the trade union movement and other democratic forces started to make meaningful contributions to the debates in South Africa. The concepts of a module, credit, mobility, progression, flexibility, and so on were all used in the proposals that were made in the reports highlighted above. These were the very concepts that were later used to construct an NQF. Where did de Lange get these ideas? This was a difficult question to answer since the report itself did not give any reference to international experiences. However, it has been noted in the literature that there was an international discourse on the integration of formal and nonformal education (Stoikov 1975) and that one of the respondents pointed to the World Bank policy paper published in 1980 (World Bank 1980), giving an indication of what might have influenced de Lange. It was also noted that the HSRC/NTB Report of 1984 made some references to the British and Australian systems. It has also been shown that the trade union movement and other role players made visits to Britain and Australia in their search for policy alternatives to those of apartheid. This raises questions about the transformative agenda of the NQF and indeed the enormous expectation that people in South Africa might have.

What part did globalisation and policy borrowing play in the trajectory followed by the NQF in South Africa? What were the different strategies used in borrowing?

The overall framework of globalisation and policy borrowing informs the analysis of this research. It has been shown that globalisation and policy borrowing played very significant roles in explaining the origins and trajectory followed by the NQF in South Africa. We have seen that the outgoing White government, ANC/COSATU alliance, and the democratic government all made references to globalisation in their

deliberations for a future education and training system. Despite its contested meanings, policy makers still make use of the 'semantics of globalisation' and international trends to justify and accelerate educational reform. The themes on globalisation and policy borrowing discussed in earlier sections of this chapter capture some of the answers to this research question. We have seen that even though some of the ideas of the NQF were in the de Lange Report (HSRC 1981) and in the HSRC/NTB (1984) report, the trade union movement and its social partners went abroad for legitimisation and recognition, both nationally and internationally.

However, drawing on the work of Schriewer and Martinez (2004) and Steiner-Khamasi (2000, 2002), it should be realised that borrowing from the Apartheid education and training system was going to be highly contested in South Africa. Therefore a possible option was to look for foreign models and ideas, which their international status alone would lend them credibility and legitimacy. According to Schriewer and Martinez (2004), international models are used as a leverage to carry out reforms that otherwise would be contested.

Ochs and Phillips (2002a,b) suggest that cross-national attraction that might result in policy borrowing is sparked by a number of stimuli. In examining the South African case, it is clear that all the stimuli listed played a part in the processes that informed the origins, development and implementation of South Africa's NQF. Briefly, they are:

- **Political change.** The end of Apartheid in South Africa and the coming to power of a newly elected democratic government in 1994 are widely known. Clearly anything associated with the apartheid system (education and training were intimately tied up with the system) needed to change, and in suggesting change it was clear to look for alternatives abroad. This study has demonstrated that the ANC and its allies went abroad to look for ideas to transform the post-Apartheid education and training system through the national qualifications framework when the ideas were not new in South Africa (similar ideas already existed in reforms initiated by Apartheid). Was

there an apparent need to look for those ideas from elsewhere? There is documentary and interview evidence to suggest that the NQF initiative in South Africa has merely reinforced and amplified what was already in place. However, drawing on the work of Schriewer and Martinez (2004) and Steiner-Khamasi (2000, 2002), it should be realised that borrowing from the Apartheid education and training system was going to be highly contested in South Africa. Therefore a possible option was to look for foreign models and ideas, which their international status alone would lend them credibility and legitimacy. According to Schriewer and Martinez (2004), international models are used as a leverage to carry out reforms that otherwise would be contested. It should also be remembered at this point that even though the political context changed in South Africa in 1994, the key actors in government, Apartheid laws and structures remained as in the Apartheid period. The Mandela government inherited Apartheid laws until they were changed and there was a sun set clause in the Interim Constitution to keep civil servants from the previous government for ten years. Given this situation, to claim that South Africa looked at international models in order to replace the Apartheid system is to miss the point.

- **Systemic collapse.** The struggle against apartheid had brought much of the education system especially in Black townships to a point of collapse. There were school boycotts, demonstrations and strikes, which left the infrastructure in a poor state. Something needed to be done to re-establish order.
- **Internal dissatisfaction.** This relates to other factors, but because of the state of the system there was a mounting pressure from parents and industry to improve and upgrade the system.
- **Negative external evaluation.** South Africa's re-entry into the international community brought with it comparisons on a range of levels, including pass rates in Maths and Science subjects. There is tendency of borrowing to look

modern and to meet international standards and at least minimise the risk of falling behind strategies adopted in other countries.

- **New configurations and alliances.** Most significant here were the common concerns of business and labour in confronting the challenges posed by the opening of the South African economy after years of isolation.
- **Knowledge and skills innovations.** Related to the 5 above, there is growing emphasis on new technology as a critical part of the new economy, and therefore pressure on the education system to incorporate skills required to use the technologies of the information age into the curriculum.
- **The aftermath of extreme upheaval.** Similar to 1 above, the ending of a racially exclusive system generated enormous social upheaval, and foregrounded the need for an explicit social justice agenda into the curriculum.
- **Economic change.** The change in the economy in South Africa that characterised the period 1976-1980. In response to these challenges the Apartheid government adopted a market-oriented ideology, so common internationally during the 1980s. In the education sphere international references were particularly evident in many of the recommendations of the de Lange and the HSRC/NTB Reports, which reflected similar themes in more developed Anglophone countries.

A close examination of the set of questions suggested by Phillips and Ochs (2004b) in Chapter 2, showed that no sufficient regard was given to those questions and issues raised as South Africa looked for alternatives from the experiences of other countries. It has been shown that New Zealand started with a single comprehensive model that covered all qualifications in the education and training system, including university education. The model was severely criticised and some pedagogical and educational concerns such as implementing a system based on unit standards were

raised. Surprisingly, the South African Qualifications Authority developed a comprehensive qualifications framework that covered all education and training, and which was based on unit standards. The same criticisms and issues that were raised in New Zealand were also raised in South Africa. It has also been shown that the NQV model was being criticised because of its complex jargon ridden language and bureaucracy, which have restricted NVQ success. South Africa followed the same path and developed a cumbersome and overly bureaucratic NQF, which became a bone of contention among stakeholders. In other words, some of the criticisms that were levelled against NVQs in England and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework were also raised in South Africa. This is an indication that when South Africa borrowed from these countries, it did not draw on the lessons from those countries as well.

We have seen that different methods were used in borrowing ideas from abroad. The outgoing White government used mainly media reports because they were relatively isolated from the rest of the international community due to its apartheid policies. Numerous references to international models were reflected in their reform proposals. The most common strategy that was used by the trade union movement and its social partners, policy makers in the new democratic government and SAQA was through study visits to other countries and the use of international consultants. The main thing that was borrowed from Australia was the competency-based model for workplace training and a framework for the recognition of competency.

Why did SAQA develop a framework that covered all academic and vocational learning based at school, in the workplace, and in non-formal environments?

It was difficult to understand the logic why in the first place SAQA opted for a strong NQF model when the conditions on the ground were not favourable. It has been shown that the National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI), which published its report in April 1994 (NTB 1994), recommended the adoption of an integrated approach to education and training. This meant that it was possible to deal with education and training as a whole, but at the same time deal with each sub-system in

a unique manner. In other words, an integrated approach was meant to recognise commonalities and differences within the education and training system. It was not meant to blur their differences, but to recognise them. The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE 1995) also endorsed an integrated approach to education and training.

However, SAQA will always point to the SAQA Act of 1995 and they will argue that they are implementing the Act. According to their view, a weak NQF was not going to solve the inequalities and injustices inherited from apartheid. Equity and inclusivity were at the centre of this vision that seeks to do away with old divisions and inequalities. A comprehensive framework would provide the means to incrementally upgrade historically disadvantaged learners to achieve agreed standards. It was going to be a vital tool for overcoming historical exclusion. Economic benefits are also believed to accrue from implementing a strong NQF. It is argued that South Africa's needs was a reasonable supply of trained and multi-skilled workers for all groups of population in order to improve productivity. While this model seemed to be the one most attractive given the past history, this thesis has raised some questions regarding the efficacy and viability of this approach. If the goal was to address the issues of redress, what needed to be considered were the different groups of people in different contextual situations. The flexibility of an outcomes based qualifications framework would allow different curricula to be delivered to these different groups of people. The original idea was not to blot out those differences and collapse education and training into fields of knowledge, as what SAQA did.

How and why did the idea of an NQF change over time?

It has been shown that the idea of a national qualifications framework has its roots in the reforms initiated by outgoing White government from the early 1980s. The agenda during this period was to address economic and political challenges that were confronting the country. The idea of an NQF re-surfaced in the early 1990s with an additional agenda of social justice and redress. The trade union and democratic

movement in South Africa spearheaded the social justice agenda. The vision was to establish an integrated system of education and training. For the democratic movement, this meant having one Ministry of Education and Training as well as blotting out the differences between academic education and vocational training. As has been shown, this was understood in terms of the history of apartheid that was characterised by divisions and inequalities of provisions among different racial groups. As discussed above, the idea of an integrated system shifted to an integrated approach in the NTSI (NTB 1994) and in the White Paper of Education and Training (DoE 1995). The integrated approach was a result of compromise and negotiations. The ANC/COSATU alliance wanted an integrated system, while the outgoing departments of National Education and Manpower wanted them separated. The integrated approach was adopted in the NTSI and the White Paper on Education and Training also endorsed that position. The decision to have two Ministries of Education and Labour should be understood in terms of the interim Constitution that informed the Government of National Unity (GNU). This meant that there was an entirely different system in government than was anticipated prior to government and SAQA failed to work out the implications of that.

SAQA developed a strong and comprehensive NQF that collapsed education and training into learning fields of knowledge. The model that SAQA developed was criticised and in 2001, the Ministers of Education and Labour appointed a Study Team to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems and procedures adopted by SAQA to implement the NQF. The Study Team report (DoE & DoL 2002) argued that an integrated approach should not mean removing the differences between education and training, but rather to recognise them so as to maintain their essential and distinct purposes. The Study Team (ibid: 68) suggests that 'education and training should be seen as representing a continuum of learning', rather than collapsing them. This takes us back to the National Training Strategy Initiative debates (NTB 1994).

The joint response by the two Departments (DoE & DoL 2003) proposed three different but inter-related learning pathways along a continuum of learning. One end

of the learning spectrum is marked by discipline-based learning (typically in institutions such as schools and universities). Career-focussed or general vocational learning mark the middle and the other end by occupational context-based learning (typically in the workplace). This again takes us back to the debates of the 1990s. This thesis suggests that the reason behind all these changes is the fact that there are different kinds of knowledge and different modes of learning and that the NQF should not be seen as fusing them, but rather promoting their interface.

In relation to the functions of SAQA, the SAQA Act of 1995 gave the authority the powers to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF. However, the structures that were put in place by SAQA were not holding and there was a call to streamline its functions. As has been shown, the joint response by the two Departments (DoE & DoL 2003) proposed new structures that would be responsible for the implementation of the NQF, thus taking away some of the responsibilities of SAQA. However, there is a danger that such proposed new structures would just form an inefficient, ineffective and inflexible bureaucracy. The key issue is not about bureaucracy, but about power struggle and who is in charge.

Concluding remarks

From an examination of the origins and trajectory followed by the NQF in South Africa, it is apparent that the de Lange Report (DNE 1981) and the HSRC/NTB Report (1984) provided the building blocks upon which the NQF was constructed. As such, these two reports have provided an excellent foundation through which it has been possible to examine the origins and trajectory of the NQF in South Africa. This study concludes that the development of the NQF in South Africa has been incremental rather than a product of a break from the past. As indicated earlier, this is in sharp contrast to the rhetoric that the NQF was a democratic project meant to reform the apartheid education and training system. The findings of this research are important because they put into question the democratic and social justice goals associated with the NQF. Whilst the majority of South Africans are waiting for the

NQF to deliver the promised benefits, it might be worth looking back and realise that economic factors were the main drivers for this reform initiative. Acknowledging the link between the NQF and the past might help policy makers to come up with proposals that go beyond the present NQF and give more emphasis to issues of redress and social justice, including recognition of prior learning.

Related to the above point, the thesis has established that the context of expressing the NQF objectives in very ambitious terms was to address the issues of redress in a country that was marked by a deeply fragmented and uncoordinated education and training system. However, it has been argued that the NQF on its own cannot achieve those ambitious objectives unless it is linked to other measures that promote social justice goals. It has been pointed out that outcomes-based frameworks are divorced from any institutional provision or practice. In other words, the processes involved in outcomes-based frameworks, such as standards setting and assessment may lose contact with practitioners involved in teaching, training and assessing. This raised further questions given that in an outcomes-based framework such processes described above rely on trust but have been separated from such practices on which the trust would need to be based. Young (2002) made a similar point when he suggested that outcomes based qualifications frameworks are likely to be ineffective if they are not 'based in the shared values and practices of communities of trust' (p. 60). The qualification is obtained in an institution and hence the need to link national qualifications frameworks to institutional development. Over emphasis on outcomes and standards and less emphasis on the surrounding 'institutional logics' renders qualifications frameworks ineffective. Institutional change and development should drive qualifications frameworks and not the other way round. We have seen that the NQF in South Africa has been developed with very ambitious objectives and placed an enormous burden of expectation on the NQF. Raffe (2005) made a related point when he suggested that 'the literature on qualifications frameworks suggests that they are most successful when they are modest in ambition and incremental in approach' (p. 21).

The trajectory that has been followed by the NQF in South Africa holds useful lessons for other countries in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) trying to develop and implement a similar initiative. The first is that the development of an NQF must adopt an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary approach. The second is that they must be realistic in ambition and the third is that the bodies responsible for developing qualifications frameworks need to take due consideration to the political, social and economic environment within which the policy decisions are taken. Divorcing themselves from this reality renders qualifications frameworks ineffective.

This thesis concludes by raising some issues, which could be considered for further research in the South African context. Firstly is the question for the tension between social goals and those for the economic. Focussing on the economic development agenda can result in less emphasis on issues of equity or social justice. The question is: 'does SAQA pursue the economic development agenda or the social justice one'. Focussing on the social justice agenda might mean a re-think for SAQA in relation to its priorities and its target groups. The second issue is in relation to what can and cannot be achieved by a national qualifications framework. Considering the fact that the NQF was established with very broad objectives, and that it cannot be the only instrument to achieve them, it might be worth looking at what the NQF can specifically do. It has been suggested that the NQF is just an enabling framework, which cannot on its own achieve the objectives as stated in the SAQA Act. It can be understood why they were expressed in such ambitious terms in 1995. However, given what has been illuminated by this research about the history of the NQF in South Africa, and the experience in other countries, such as Scotland, where the context of establishing the SCQF might be seen as more favourable to the introduction of change, it might lead to a consideration of how priorities can be specified.

The evidence from this research suggests that South Africa should look at the possibilities of developing a 'looser' framework and it also supports the recommendations outlined in the Consultative Document as a possible direction in

which the NQF should take. Last but not least, the findings of this research are challenging South Africa for it to have the political maturity to recognise aspects of continuity with its apartheid past, so that it could build on them where desirable.

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APPENDIX A

Checklists of questions that were incorporated as the interview progresses

The study is about understanding the trajectory followed by the national qualifications framework in South Africa. At one level this research is about the origins of the policy initiatives that resulted in the establishment of the NQF in South Africa. On another level it is about how the NQF has been developed and implemented through the interaction of local and global influences.

The first set of checklist questions deal with the origins of the NQF and the economic and political imperatives around educational transformation and a discussion of the key actors who were involved

The second set of questions will address the process of formulating the NQF Bill that became the SAQA Act in 1995.

The third set of questions deals with the process of NQF development and implementation by SAQA

Antecedents and origins of the NQF in South Africa

1. What role have you played in relation to the debates in South Africa about having a National Qualifications Framework?
2. What were the origins of these debates?
3. What were its drivers?
4. How were the debates influenced by other developments nationally and internationally?
5. What 'vision' (of lifelong learning, education and training system) lied behind those debates?
6. Has that vision been consistent with that of the newly elected democratic government?

7. From your own opinion, has that vision been realised?

Formulation of the NQF Bill: Inter-Ministerial Working Group

8. What part have you played in relation to the development and implementation of the NQF?
9. Where did the initiative come from? What were its origins?
10. What were its drivers? What gave it its momentum?
11. How is the NQF influenced by other developments nationally and internationally and how does it influence regional developments?
12. What is the place of the NQF in South Africa's Educational Policy, and how does it fit with other policies?
13. What 'vision' (of lifelong learning, education and training system) lied behind the NQF and its declared objectives?
14. How was the framework meant to achieve these objectives?
15. Have there been critical phases during the time of your involvement in the development process?
16. When you framed the NQF objectives, did you have a vision of the model of the framework that would achieve those objectives?
17. What were the main factors supporting and impeding progress, and in which areas?

The Development and Implementation of the framework: SAQA/other stakeholders

18. What role have you played in relation to the NQF process?
19. Where did the initiative come from? What were its origins?
20. What were its drivers? What gave it its momentum?

21. What 'vision' (of lifelong learning, education system, etc) lies behind the NQF and its declared objectives?
22. Do all stakeholders share this vision?
23. Who were the stakeholders and what did each do?
24. How is the framework meant to achieve its objectives?
25. How will success or failure be measured?
26. How is the development and implementation of the NQF influenced by other developments internationally? Any international models?
27. How would you describe your strategy in the development and implementation process? Has your strategy changed over time?
28. What are the main factors supporting and impeding progress, and in which areas?
29. What was your response to the Study Team Report and to the Consultative Document?
30. In your opinion, why is the NQF review taking so long to conclude?

APPENDIX B

List of Interviewees⁴²

Name	Affiliation/Designation ⁴³
Saleem Badat	Council on Higher Education (CHE), CEO
Adrienne Bird	Department of Labour, DDG
Ronel Blom	SAQA, Deputy Director Research
Linda Chisholm	HSRC, Director
Pam Christie	University of Queensland
Trevor Coombe	Department of Education
Anonymous	HSRC
Audris Drost	Retired (de Lange Committee)
Schalk Engelbrecht	Retired (de Lange Committee)
Anonymous	University of Cape Town
Anonymous	HSRC
Bobby Godsell	AngloGold, CEO
Anonymous	Department of Labour
Samuel Isaacs	SAQA
Jonathan Jansen	University of Pretoria
Anonymous	HSRC
Simon McGrath	HSRC, Director
Anonymous	Department of Education
Anonymous	Department of Labour
Anonymous	SAQA
Jan Nieuwenhuis	University of Pretoria/de Lange Committee
Mokubung Nkomo	SAQA Board, Chair
Anonymous	Department of Education

⁴² Apart from those listed here, I also had some informal discussions with people such as Stephanie Allais, doing a PhD on the NQF; Salim Akoojee (HSRC); David Philips (NZQA); John Hart (Private Consultant); Mary Metcalfe (University of Wits); Yusef Waghid (University of Stellenbosch); Molapo Qhobela (Department of Education); Joe Samuels (SAQA); James Keevy (SAQA); Jim Gallacher (University of Glasgow); and Vusi Mabena (Business)

Anonymous

HSRC

Anonymous

NTB

Michael Young

Institute of London

APPENDIX C

A brief historical chronology of events and key documents that led to the development of the NQF

Apartheid education and training was instituted in 1948, although extreme forms of racial segregation were the norm long before that date. The global economic crisis of Fordism, which commenced in the early 70s; the internal shocks of the 1973 massive spontaneous strikes; the 1976 Soweto Uprisings and the international pressure on South Africa herself, combined to weaken the apartheid state. It was forced to take action. It established a number of Commissions of Inquiry to seek a new regime of control. The outcome was the introduction of a new set of laws, which sought to de-racialise in areas where it was possible without completely dismantling the apartheid system as whole. One of these was the introduction of the Manpower Training Act, 1981, which for the first time brought all previously training legislation under a single, non-rationally defined act. For the first time African could have access to apprenticeships, one of the elements of the new approach as reflected in the Wiehahn Report (Wiehahn 1982). The recommendations of the Hiehahn Report (Wiehahn 1982) and those of the Riekert's, for a 'free market' in South Africa, was a pointer toward a market-oriented ideology.

Similar discussions took place within the learning system. The de Lange Commission (DNE 1981) into the state of education reported in 1980. The report made crucial recommendations, which could be linked to the NQF that emerged in the early 1990s and consolidated in 1994. The following are extracts from the de

⁴³ Affiliations/Designations given are those at the time of interview. Several informants have moved from their initial organisations to other organisations.

Lange Report (HSRC 1981), which will help to illustrate the connection. A new educational structure proposed in the report was defined as follows:

The educational structure is the framework within which different types of teaching and learning situations are arranged, including also their mutual relationships. The structure makes provision for various educational possibilities as well as for the possibility for both vertical and horizontal flow of pupils through the system (p. 95).

The de Lange Report argued that learners in non-formal education had few possibilities of continuing their study and training within the formal provision of education (p. 104). The report recommended an investigation into the establishment of a national certification body that would be responsible for standards of evaluation and certification in both formal and nonformal education (p. 104).

In the report, the concept of 'levels' (p. 98) is used instead of grade, standard and form.

The report also recommended the 'recognition of modules (credits) in courses' (p. 123) in order to facilitate horizontal flow. The report argued that

if modules in courses are not mutually recognised then horizontal flow between institutions on one hand and between courses within a particular institution on the other, remains limited (p. 124).

One of the objectives of a new proposed modular educational structure was to

create an integrated, flexible relationship between formal and nonformal education, between school and the world of work, in the context of lifelong continuing education (p. 194)

The recommendations made by the de Lange Committee were reinforced in the report published by the HSRC/NTB in 1984 entitled *An Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA* (HSRC/NTB 1984). This report has shown that even in South Africa, there has been an increasing realisation that the economic performance of a country depends upon the capacities of its workers. It noted that South Africa's needs was a reasonable supply of trained workers for all groups of population in order to improve productivity.

It is important to take note of the fact that most of these recommendations were influenced by global experiences. The HSRC/NTB Report (HSRC/NTB 1984) made references to some international practices such as the British training system and the competency movement in Australia. These were the very countries that influenced debates in South Africa in the 1990s, when the political climate changed. It is also important to note that these developments we have seen so far, occurred before Adrienne Bird, considered by many to be the chief architect of the NQF from the early 1990s, opened up the training agenda in the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in 1989.

The reform proposals put forward by the apartheid government did not do much in terms of limiting boycotts and strikes from the Black population. Throughout the 1980s, there were continued classroom boycotts and discontent among Black communities that coalesced around the People's Education movement. Under the banner of the National Education Co-ordination Committee (NECC) in the 1980s, for example criticised the rigidity and inflexibility of the apartheid education system and argued for a system that would facilitate access to the majority of the disadvantaged groups of the population. This People's Education Movement was focussed on criticising the existing education system without proposing alternative options.

The apartheid crisis reached its peak when apartheid state declared states of emergency in 1985 and 1986. It was these developments that led Alex Erwin, then National Education Secretary of NUMSA, to announce in 1988 to a groups of union officials that political negotiations had commenced and it was time that they needed

to move beyond opposition and begin thinking about policy. A group of 25 shop stewards including Adrienne Bird were appointed to the research and development Groups (RDGs) in 1989. The groups visited different countries in 1989 and Adrienne and her group went to Australia and in 1990 and finalised their recommendations in NUMSA's Vocational Project (Bird 1991). The group's recommendations were tabled to the union's National Congress in May 1991 and got their approval at the Congress of South African Trade Union's National Congress in July 1991. The focus of NUMSA and COSATU at this stage was on training and they recommended the development of competency standards and training modules with a co-ordinated accreditation system. A national certification system that would ensure the portability of knowledge and skills acquired was proposed for this purpose. This is what we have seen in de Lange Report (DNE 1981) and in the HSRC/NTB Report (HSRC/NTB 1984). The idea of an NQF emerged that would plot equivalences between qualifications to maximise horizontal and vertical mobility.

At the same time, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was launched in 1990 to propose policy option for a post-apartheid South Africa. The proposals for integrating education and training were based on post-Fordist arguments about changes in the industrial division of labour. Theorists of post-Fordism, such as Piore and Sabel (1986) predicted that the divisions between mental and manual labour would disappear under new forms of production. The prediction of the disappearance of the divisions between academic and vocational learning followed from these arguments. Post-Fordist thinking within the NEPI and ANC/COSATU deliberations was mainly influenced by Michael Young who drew his arguments from a publication by the IPPR of the British Baccalaureate (Finegold et al., 1990).

Other groups have been thinking about these issues as well. Following the announcement by President de Klerk in 1990 that apartheid would go, the officials from the National Education Department also initiated a process of policy discussion. This initiative culminated in the publication of the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) in 1992. A key theme in the report was the call for three parallel streams for post-compulsory phase: general education, vocational education and industrial

training, mirroring initiatives in Britain such as the system of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) emerging in England at the time. The ERS indicated that the proposed tripartite form of post-compulsory phase would be linked within the framework of a national qualification structure.

In 1991, the NTB through the HSRC published a report called the *National Training Strategy*. The report insisted about the need for linkages between formal education and the training system. The report recommended the establishment of a single, unified Department of Education and Training, implying one department having the dual functions of education and training. In that year COSATU was invited by the Minister of Manpower to nominate a representative to the NTB. At the first meeting in August 1991, the representative was asked to endorse the proposed National Strategy and COSATU refused to endorse the strategy. The reasons given were that the NTB was not properly constituted and the proposed strategy was not consistent with the resolution adopted at the COSATU congress. COSATU's resolution was a unified system of education and training, where as the National Training Strategy had proposed a dual system.

In 1993, when the balance of forces politically had changed completely (Nelson Mandela had been released from prison), all parties agreed to begin the process of negotiating a new National Training Strategy. The outcome was a consensus report, known as the national Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI), which was finally published in April 1994. The key theme that emerged out of the NTSI deliberations was the concept of an integrated approach to education and training. This meant a dual system of education and training linked by a qualifications framework. The model of integration that emerged out of the deliberations of the NTSI was proposed in the 1991 Training Strategy that was rejected by COSATU. The model was also proposed in ERS document in 1992. What we see here is that the ANC/COSATU position of a unified education and training system adopted by the NTSI. This was the first blow suffered by the ANC/COSATU vision of the integration of education and training.

Whilst the National Training Board work was underway, there were a number of parallel processes that were going on. The ANC established the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) in 1993 to develop a coherent education policy. The CEPD published the ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training in January 1994. This policy framework recommended for a single Department of Education and Training and a unified system of education and training. However, the ANC position was not adopted in the NTSI published in May 1994. In the new government, education and training were kept in separate ministries, and policies of the two were developed separately.